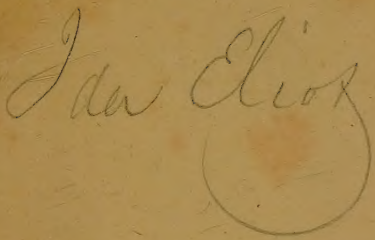

THE CHILDHOOD of MARY LEESON.

by

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PREFACE FOR PARENTS.

I HAVE often been asked to write a work on Education; people have imagined that, because I had children of my own, I must understand the subject, and they have done me the honour to wish me to instruct them. I certainly have my own ideas on the importance of early education, especially, and I hope that they are not altogether wrong.

The story of Mary Leeson's childhood, which I have given in the following pages, embodies my idea of the spirit which ought to direct the education of a child.

I have written nothing that I do not know to be true, nor recommended any thing which I do not consider as essentially important—indeed, so important do I consider every means which conduces to a wise and affectionate early education, that if I knew how to impress it more earnestly upon the public, than by words, I would do it.

At a future time I shall probably give the history of the next ten years of Mary Leeson's life; in which it shall be seen what was the superstructure which rose upon a foundation of truth, obedience, and love.

THE ELMS, CLAPTON,
April, 1848.

THE

CHILDHOOD OF MARY LEESON.

CHAPTER I.

MARY'S HOME.

As I wish to make you perfectly acquainted with Mary Leeson, I must first introduce you to her, when she was four years old.

At four years old Mary Leeson could read, I am very sorry to say so; but as it is a fact, I must tell you. She was an only child, and her mother, who loved her intensely, and who was very proud of her quickness and early ability to learn, and who had little to do but to attend to her and to teach her, had taught her to read by that time; and as Mary loved books better than any thing else, and had been used to have them read to her ever since she could remember any thing, it is no wonder that, when she could read herself, there was hardly any getting her away from them. She would sit poring over a great volume nearly as big as herself for hours.

Mary Leeson's home was in the middle of a large old manufacturing town. The country round this town was exceedingly pleasant, but from the house where she lived nothing of it could be seen. Her home was a large old-fashioned house, with wainscoted rooms, paintings on old panels in the walls, carved wood-work, and handsome ornamented ceilings. It had formerly belonged to one of the wealthy county families, and had been their town house in those ancient times, when people did not regularly go up to London for "the season," but satisfied themselves with the county town and its quieter pleasures instead. There were many such houses as these in the town where Mary lived. Mary's little bed-room, which was the dressing room to her parents' chamber, had one of those beautiful carved ceilings of which I have spoken. Many wreaths of fruit and flowers encircled it, and from the four angles formed by a large circle, which composed the centre, looked down four cherubs with folded wings and calmly smiling countenances, which gave Mary the happy idea, when she was a very little child, that she was watched over by angels.

The large old house was divided into two. Mary's family lived in the front and larger portion of it, and a draper, who had a shop adjoining, lived at the back. A very curious man was this draper; always very spruce, and neat, and smiling in his shop, and always very cross in his house,

where he lived with an old fat housekeeper, a man servant, and a little dog named Tiger. In this part of the old mansion there was a tapestried chamber. Mary wished very much that it had been in their portion of the house. On one landing of the staircase was the blocked-up door which led into it, and she could see its two windows as she went up stairs, and when they were open she strained her eyes to peep in, but she could see nothing but darkness, for the sun never shone into them, and that made the room only the more mysterious.

At the back of the draper's house, and at the end of a flagged court, a large and handsome iron gate led, by a flight of steps, into a garden into which the windows of the draper's parlour looked. It was a very small garden, consisting of a square grass-plot, with a gravel-walk round it, outside of which was a narrow flower-border, and all was inclosed with a high brick wall, which was nearly covered on one side of the garden by a flourishing jasmine. At the further end of the garden grew two elm-trees, and under these lay a quantity of beams of wood and old joists, which had been left, most likely, from the time when the large house had been divided. The border, where the wood lay, was the only one which was not regularly dug and planted with flower roots once a year.

Every thing in this garden was blackened with

smoke; the elm-trees, the walls, even the jasmine twigs; still, for all this, the garden looked pleasant, especially when the white lilies, which sprung up and blossomed in spite of the town air, were in flower among the campanulas and the sweet-williams, which bloomed for one season, and then quietly dwindled away, to give place to others the following year.

To Mary, who, as I have said, was an only child, and whose only companions were books and grown-up people, this garden was a perfect paradise. To her small experience it was beautiful, fresh, verdant, all that a garden need be. The never-failing white lilies, tall and stately, the flourishing, fragrant jasmine, the sweetwilliams, the gillyflowers, and ribbon-grass, if they grew finer elsewhere, she did not trouble herself about the fact; they were flowers, real, lovely flowers to her, and that was enough.

It was, however, in the untrimmed, untidy border at the bottom of the garden, under the elm-trees, and among the old lumbering beams and joists, that her greatest delight lay. Now do not, my young readers, imagine that Mary loved what was disorderly and unsightly, because it was quite the contrary. But this was the only part of the garden where she could do what she pleased, and her childish imagination, as all children's imagination can do, made this a perfect paradise. Mary, who had all her life been accustomed to see beautiful

pictures, and to hear beautiful poetry read, had her mind full of knights, and ladies, and old halls, and terraced gardens, on the steps of which stood vases of flowers. And now here, among this piled-up, lumbering timber, she fashioned terraces, shaded with noble trees, and leading down into palace gardens; on the steps of her terraces she placed her flower-pots, filled with what in that part of the country is called poor man's pepper, house-leek, and pedlar's basket. Here, also, behind the timber, she was permitted to do a little digging privately, and even to make a small kitchen garden, in which she set mustard and cress in spring, and into which she transplanted daisies and cowslips later in the year.

Nobody interfered with her here, not even the draper, though he now and then would begin a half scolding conversation with her out of his parlour window, which always put her heart in a great flutter, but which never kept her from the place; and, as she had no playfellows, her beautiful, airy castles never were thrown down to give place to those of others. Now and then, it is true, her mother would walk down into the garden to look after her, to take her a little woollen shawl, perhaps, if a cold wind had begun to blow, or if it looked likely for rain; but then she always seconded her little daughter's ideas, and would even walk up the timber herself, just as if it had been the steps of a lordly terrace; and she would admire the poor

man's pepper, and the houseleek, and the pedlar's basket, just as much as if they had been the finest plants that ever came out of a hothouse. Thus little Mary's pleasant illusions were never destroyed.

In winter and bad weather, Mary used to play by herself in a large garret, which had a network of beams in its ceiling, a little window, in the angle of the gable, looking out over the draper's roof, and past all his chimneys, down into the garden beyond, only that nothing could be seen of it from there, excepting the upper branches of the elm-trees. The walls of the garret were yellow, and its door was heavy like a cottage door, turning on large hinges and with a wooden latch, which opened from the outside with a string, and fell with a loud sound. To any body but the child this was a large naked room; but to her, who had peopled it with the beings of her imagination, and who had already enjoyed much pleasure in it, it was equal to any other room in the house.

Well, in this garret, which was in the very top of the house, Mary used to play by herself; she contrived to divide it with imaginary boundaries into kitchen, and parlour, and drawing-room, and pleasure-ground; and here she had her playthings and her rocking-horse, which afforded her inconceivable delight. She had a very romantic imagination; and as she had all kind of beautiful fancies of lords and ladies, her rocking-horse became a

palfrey with flowing mane and tail. She rode out, in fancy, a-hawking, with a falcon on her wrist, and with knights, and dames, and pages in attendance.

In person Mary was slight and delicate; she read too much, and lived too much in a sort of pleasant dream world to be a robust child. Her parents often wished, for her sake, that they could live altogether in the country, which they thought would do her so much good; but, as they could not, they did the best in their power, which we will afterwards explain. In appearance Mary was very like a half-opened blush-rose; she was very fair, with the faintest tint on her cheeks, large soft blue eyes that had the expression of a turtle-dove's, and light brown hair that curled upon her shoulders.

I cannot tell you how dear Mary was to her parents, nor yet how much she loved them; but there were many others that loved Mary besides her parents, and who these were I will tell you.

CHAPTER II.

MARY'S FRIENDS.

MARY'S uncle Edward was a poet. He was unmarried and lived alone, and now and then used

to come to Mary's father's, where he stayed many weeks together. As long as Mary could remember any thing, she could remember this uncle's love to her. She used to sit on his knee for hours to hear him repeat his beautiful verses. He never wrote down his poems, but kept them in his head; and, even when she was a very little child, he had great pleasure in repeating them to her, for he always believed that she would understand them, and perhaps she could.

He was exceedingly fond of taking long walks on fine Sunday mornings. It was a great pleasure to him to sit down on a stile and listen to the ringing of the bells of all the churches round, before the service began. He used to make little Mary listen how the sound seemed to be up in the air, as if it came down from angels among the clouds; and then he would walk on towards the village and watch all the villagers going into the church. It was a sight that always interested him, and he was sure to make beautiful observations, which were so full of truth and love, that like the Gospels, in which Mary delighted, she could understand their spirit if she could not always understand their full meaning.

Mary, from her earliest childhood, had learned to love the country and to know a good deal about it, not only from her uncle Edward, but from her father and mother. They both of them had in their youth been brought up in the country, and

had studied botany and natural history of various kinds, and now, though they lived in the very heart of a large town, they contrived to get out into the fields and the open air as much as they could; and, in summer time, they took long walks, and even excursions for whole days. Little Mary often went with them, even when she was too young to walk so far, and then her father used to carry her on his back, and in this way she travelled for many miles. As they went on thus pleasantly, like pilgrims in some old story, they would gather flowers, of which she always was told the names, or they would listen to the songs of the birds, all of which her father knew perfectly. And what a delight it was to her to sit in some pleasant wood a long, long way, as it seemed to her, from home, with her father and mother, and every thing so still around them, that the very birds would come and sit on the boughs above them, and begin singing, just as if they were the only living things in the wood! In this way she learned the form and appearance of a great many birds; blackbirds, and thrushes, and linnets, and the various kinds of the titmouse and little wrens; and she would hear now and then a nightingale. Mary's parents would not let her have any kind of birds, excepting canaries, in cages, because it is so cruel to confine our little songsters that have never been used to any thing but perfect liberty. The delight that she thus experienced in the coun-

try is inexpressible; and even when she was very young, her knowledge of flowers, and birds, and trees, seemed to every body, who did not know how she had gained it, really extraordinary.

In spring time Mary's father used to take her into the fields and lead her among the richly springing flowers and grass under the hedges, to peep among the boughs and budding leaves for birds' nests, which he thought so beautiful, made of delicate moss, and lichen, and hair, and dry grass, in which lay the lovely blue and green and delicately speckled eggs.

Often Uncle Edward would go with them, and then Mary had a double pleasure, for he loved birds and their nests as well as her father did. She loved to listen to the pleasant talk between them, sometimes about the skylark that was singing, as it were, at the very gates of heaven, up among the sunshine of the blue sky; or about the freckled beauty of the snake that lay on the bank, basking among springing leaves and budding flowers, and which, at their approach, glided away with a a rapid yet stealthy movement; or about the cowslips in the grass, the delicate scent of which Mary's father often said brought back the days of his boyhood, when he and his brothers sat outside the garden door, in the sunshine of a spring day, picking cowslips from their stems to make wine of.

But I began to tell you about Mary's friends,

and I have made a long digression. Besides Uncle Edward, there was Mr. Sunderland, who came now and then to see her parents, and who had loved Mary ever since she was a little baby in arms. And as year by year she grew older, and of course gained an increase of knowledge and experience, he loved her still more.

Mr. Sunderland had rambled all over the world, and had, therefore, seen a great deal, and could not only describe all he had seen, but could act it also. He could alter his countenance and voice, and represent all sorts of people; old grave Indian chiefs, such as he had seen in the forests of North America; turbaned sultans sitting cross-legged and smoking long pipes; or twirling dervishes, or old fakeers of Hindostan, who preached sermons in the queerest language that Mary had any idea of. Besides having seen all this, and having been shipwrecked, and having travelled over the Great Desert, and been in South America on the Amazon River, and high up among the snows of Chimborazo, he had suffered much in many ways, and had had a deal of sorrow, all of which was known to Mary's parents. This suffering and this sorrow had filled his heart with sympathy, and love, and pity, not only for his fellow-creatures, but for the meanest thing that lived. He could not bear to see any thing ill-used, or in captivity, or not as happy as he believed the Almighty intended it to be. In this

respect Mary and he agreed wonderfully, for nothing made her more miserable than to see any thing suffer.

Besides the great love which Mr. Sunderland had for all living creatures, he was one of those who see beauty in every thing. A little variegated feather out of a bird's wing; a tiny flower; a leaf; a little branching piece of moss; nay, even a very pebble was to him a thing of wonder and beauty. With these in his hand, and little Mary on his knee, he would make such a beautiful sermon, as, while it sank deep into the child's heart, lifted her soul to God, and expanded her sympathy as broadly as his own. To make all the beauties and wonders of these natural objects more familiar and intelligible to the child, he carried a pocket microscope with him, so that she might be fully aware how marvellous an artificer was God, whose works, the more closely they are inspected the more perfect they are found to be, which is just the opposite to the works of man. Mr. Sunderland made Mary perceive this when he showed her a piece of gold brocaded silk, the most splendid of its kind which the art of man could frame, and the wing of a peacock-butterfly. Both were similar in colour; and of the two, the silk brocade appeared the more splendid; but when examined through the microscope the one was as coarse and irregular as a piece of sackcloth, while the other, in its minutest texture, was a fabric of the most wonderful kind; an ex-

quisite frame-work of perfect symmetry, as if overlaid with thousands of the most gorgeous feathers, every one of which, again, was a miracle of consummate beauty.

But you must not imagine that Mr. Sunderland was always gravely teaching her; on the contrary, he was the most amusing man that came to Mary's father. He could tell the funniest stories in the world; and while he was telling them he made himself look just like the people he was talking about—old justices of the peace; beggars; fat landladies; sailors; countrymen; it did not matter what. Then he had the power of a ventriloquist, and could make his voice seem to come from all sorts of places—down the chimney or from under the floor, or as if it were somebody talking a long way off. Besides all this, when they went on an excursion into the country and came to a village or near a farm-yard, he would begin to crow so exactly like a cock, that all the chanticleers in the neighbourhood would begin crowing too; or else he would bark for a dog, and all the dogs, thinking that a stranger was among them, and perhaps understanding something very odd in the dog-language, would come rushing out to see where he was, and to offer him their friendship or to pick a quarrel with him—one could not tell which—and then Mr. Sunderland and Mary used to be so amused to see the astonishment of the dogs when they could not find one anywhere.

And sometimes, too, he would repeat passages from Shakspere and other beautiful poets. It was from him that Mary became first acquainted with the characters of Hamlet, and old Shylock, and Lady Macbeth, and he it was who first pointed out to her the lovely passages in "As You Like it," and many other plays. As Mary and her father and mother were sitting with Mr. Sunderland one summer's afternoon in the porch of an old village church, he began to chant some beautiful anthems. His voice was very deep and fine, and no sooner had he begun than it seemed as if an organ began to accompany him. They were very much astonished. He stopped, and the organ stopped; again he began, and the organ took up the air immediately, and played the accompaniment. It was very wonderful; but it was only an echo in the lofty church porch which produced the effect. But when Mary's mother and father tried their voices they could not awake it; none could do it but Mr. Sunderland, and this did not fail to produce a great effect on Mary's mind.

CHAPTER III.

MARY'S FRIENDS, CONTINUED.

MARY had many friends you will think, as I have not yet done with them, and so she had. Besides

those I have already mentioned was an old man, a Mr. Felton, he was a poor man and a great politician. Mary's father was also a politician, and had a deal to do with elections and public meetings about affairs which her father thought very important to the nation; and as little Mary was always the companion of her parents, she heard a deal of political talk, in which, young as she was, she took great interest. Mary heard about the Reform Bill, and the sufferings of Ireland, and the Chartists, and Free Trade. And when, at various times, the leaders of these movements, O'Connell, and Cobden, and others came to her father's house, they were sure to notice the intelligent little child who sat and listened with evident interest to all that was said, and who gazed with admiring eyes on those whom, from the conversation of her parents and other causes, she had learned to reverence.

But we are forgetting old Mr. Felton for much more celebrated men. Mary had heard Mr. Felton tell her father how, when he was a young man, he had lived in one of the large towns of Lancashire, and had employed many men in his business; how he had been very prosperous in those days, and should have been rich if things had not changed. But it was then the time of the French Revolution, when books were written about liberty and such subjects, and people hoped to set the world right all at once; and, as there was a deal of bloodshed and misery in France, the government in England

began to prosecute every body, in this country, who publicly held their opinions, and to burn the books which advocated them, wherever they could be found.

Mary heard Mr. Felton talk to her father of those times. He said that on one occasion men came to his house with constables, and asked whether he had this book and the other, and when he confessed that he had, they wanted to make him bring them out, and when he would not they went into his house and seized on them and carried them off and burnt them in the market-place, where they made great bonfires of such books. And, besides this, he had refused to pay the taxes, which he knew to be laid on purposely to carry on the war, because he thought that all war was wicked, and therefore the constables came and seized his goods and sold them. Still more, when he was himself enrolled in the militia, he suffered himself to be sent to gaol because he would not be a soldier, nor yet pay any body else for serving in his place. He suffered a deal while in gaol, and the magistrates, not respecting his conscientious scruples, went round to his customers and denounced him as a very wicked and dangerous man, and thus his business was taken from him, and, in the end, he was quite ruined. He and Mary's father used often to talk of those times, and all that people then suffered; how, among other things, a tax on windows had been imposed for the support of that horrible war, and people shut up all the win-

dows they could possibly spare in their houses till they looked quite like gloomy prisons, that they might not have more windows to pay for than they could help. Mary's mother said that the house she lived in when she was a child had so many blank windows that it was quite a melancholy place. There was in it what was called "the Dark Passage," and "the Dark Garret," and "the Dark Chamber," and "the Dark Closet;" in every one of which were blocked-up windows. This house had a porch at its entrance, in which were seats and two little windows; it was shut in with outer doors, and altogether made a very pretty little entrance room; but no sooner was the wicked window tax imposed than the two little windows were bricked up, and all became dark and dismal like the other places. Wherever there were two windows also in a room, one of them was blocked up; and if the room did not become dark, it looked very awkward with the window, as it were, in a corner.

Of all these things Mary heard her father and mother and Mr. Felton talk, and, though she did not understand them all, there sprang up within her a great abhorrence of war, and war-taxes, and persecutions for opinion, and for the reading of books, which she could not imagine to be very bad, because her father said that he himself had them all in his library. To her imagination it was like the times of the martyrs, of which she had heard

speak, and some idea of which she had gained from some pictures she once saw of the burnings in Smithfield. One day Mary heard her father say that if he had been a man in Mr. Felton's younger days he too should have been cast into prison and spoiled of all his goods.

Mary gathered a deal from such conversation; in the first place, that Mr. Felton had been a reformer, and had suffered for conscience' sake. He had been like John Huss, and Jerome of Prague, and Martin Luther, all of whom had been reformers, and had suffered, and some of them had been burned in the market-place, like Mr. Felton's books. She looked on him with the utmost respect, spite of his old coat and shabby hat, and spite of the extreme hunger with which he ate whenever he was asked to join them at a meal, and which Mary at first was ashamed of, but now accounted for by his being so poor. Another inference she drew was, that her father also was a reformer, a sort of Martin Luther, or Jerome of Prague, or something of that kind, which was very grand and worthy of all respect; and therefore she looked up to him more admiringly than ever.

From this time Mary condescended to notice Mr. Felton, and she soon discovered that he was worthy of her regard. In the first place, he knew a deal about canary-birds, and as hers just then wanted to sit, he undertook the management

of them for her, and set about making them little nests out of an old hat, which he cut up and sewed into shape, because the poor, captive canary has very little notion of doing these things for itself. He would set off, even in bad weather, to some distant lane or meadow, to fetch for her a primrose root, or to look how a certain blackbird's nest went on, which she and her papa or her uncle Edward had discovered the week before. In the autumn he collected plantain for her birds; and, as we proceed with our story, we shall find various other services which he was able to perform for her.

So much for Mr. Felton. Now for the friends farther from home. First of all there were the grandparents; — "grandpapa and mamma at Wilton," as they were called. Wilton was about ten miles from the town where Mary lived, and her father used not unfrequently to take her there. "Grandpapa and mamma at Wilton" were his parents, and this was the home of his boyhood. Now and then, on fine, long, glorious summer or spring days he would set off very early in the morning, often before the dew was dried, to walk to Wilton, and would take little Mary with him. Ten miles any body would think was a very long way for a little girl to walk at once, and so it would have been if she *had* walked, but when she was tired her father carried her, or he would stop and rest with her by the way for hours. Sometimes

she would drop asleep, and then, with her head nestled on his knee, and the blue sky and the quivering leaves above her, and the birds' songs and the gentle rippling of the brook in her ears, the pleasantest dreams would float through her fancy. When she awoke and opened her sweet blue eyes, she felt as if she had passed only from one pleasant dream into another, and thus refreshed, and happy as the day, she walked on, hand in hand with her father. In a while the little village church of Wilton, standing as it did on a hill, rose up before them, shining splendidly in the afternoon or evening sun.

By this time they had reached the boundaries of grandpapa's fields, where every object was so familiar to her father, and where he, as a boy, had gone bird-nesting and cowslip gathering, of which, and a hundred other things, he had so many stories to tell her.

In these fields there would be sheep, and if it were spring, young lambs, and perhaps a mare or two and their foals, all looking happy and full of life ; the rooks would be cawing about the old elm trees, and blackbirds, and thrushes, and linnets, and larks, singing with all their might. As they approached the house, the fences of all the fields were cut like a garden hedge, and the gates were painted white, looking as neat and trim as it was possible. Broad leaved arums and violets by thousands grew under many of these hedges,

which Mary and her father mostly lingered to gather, for Mary, who knew how her grandmother loved violets, was always glad to take her a little handful.

Mary's best beloved friend at Wilton was this dear grandmother. I only wish she could have been your grandmother also. If she had, you would have loved her dearly, for she was one of those whose whole life is spent in making people happy and in doing them good. Mary loved her very much, and used to think her very beautiful.

Whenever "grandmamma at Wilton" knew that Mary and her father were coming, she used to walk down the fields to meet them, and sometimes she met them coming up the fields, sometimes just as they reached the gate out of the road, and sometimes, I am sorry to say, the dear old lady would wait for them at this gate a long time. Often she waited till she was tired, and then she would walk slowly up the fields again, and sometimes they overtook her before she reached the house. When they saw her thus walking up the hill, and looking quite disconsolate with waiting so long and being disappointed at last, they walked after her as fast and as silently as they could, and then, all at once, gave a start before her, and then—was not she happy? —Oh, I wish you could have seen her!—There would be almost tears of joy in her eyes; for she

loved Mary's father dearly, and, as I have told you, I think, little Mary was her favourite grandchild.

There was a large and pleasant garden to go through before they reached the house. In the middle of the garden stood an arbour made out of lime-trees, which were clipped round, and their branches woven together at the top, to form a green roof. A broad gravel walk, very much overgrown with moss, ran across the garden and past the arbour, on each side of which were slanting beds, or rather banks, of strawberries. At the bottom of the garden, which lay on a pleasant hillside, ran another broad walk, which was a bower, from one end to the other, of filbert trees, which bore clusters on every twig. A little gate in the middle of the walk led into a rather hilly and old orchard which adjoined the garden, and which was as large as a little field.

In this orchard grew tall pear trees, and old mossy apple trees, many of them with crooked stems bending down to the ground, and looking just as if they had been fairly bowed down in their youth with the weight of their fruit, and now, in their old age, were reposing on the green soft turf of the orchard. There, too, was the cyder press, with its large stones and pole, which reminded Mary of the wine press of which she had read in the Bible. At the bottom of the orchard was a fence of damask roses; and in an-

other part of it a wonderfully fine hawthorn, which in spring was as white as snow with blossoms, and which, because he admired it so much, went by the name of "Grandpapa's Pride."

Grandpapa at Wilton was a farmer; and therefore a few days spent there made a delightful contrast to Mary's home in the heart of the town, with the little smoke-dried draper's garden. It amused her to see the cows milked and the pails of foaming milk brought in; and the cheese made in the great brass pans, which were scoured so bright, and which always brought to her mind the brazen vessels mentioned in the Bible, or those which are represented in old Dutch paintings.

Grandpapa, who was a stately and rather stern old man, took Mary into the great corn-chamber, or to see the men thrashing in the barn; he let her feed the poultry out of the little measure of corn which was allotted to them; he took her to see the calves fed, and let her ride in the hay-wagon to the field; but still it was not with her grandfather that she was so happy at Wilton as with her grandmother. They two, to use a common phrase, had many tastes in common; thus, for instance, they were very fond of flowers, and, as there was a nice flower-garden round the house in which her grandmother took great delight, Mary helped her in it; and besides this, when she went out, as she continually did, to see her poor neighbours, Mary was most happy to go with her. She was always much

interested in the long melancholy stories that the poor people told, and she talked with her grandmother about them afterwards, and was glad to help if any thing was to be made up for them. Mary and her "grandmamma at Wilton" were, in fact, very much alike, and that made them love one another so much.

CHAPTER IV.

MARY'S FRIENDS, CONTINUED.

BESIDES her "grandmamma at Wilton," Mary had another grandmamma who lived at Ellingham, a little town which lay a day's journey by coach from Mary's home. This grandmamma, as you may suppose, was the mother of Mary's mamma, and with her lived the youngest sister of Mary's mother, sweet, dear Aunt Emmeline.

Aunt Emmeline came now and then to see Mary's mother; and as long as Mary could remember any thing she could remember this beloved young aunt. Emmeline drew and sung, and was very merry; she was always ready to take a walk in the pleasant fields or woods, where she sung like a bird; and when you heard her laugh it made you feel quite happy, for you were sure she was good, or she could not have laughed in that joyous way.

Grandmamma's house at Ellingham was very unlike the house at Wilton: there was no cheese-making nor churning there; no granary nor barn where the men thrashed; no poultry, nor pigs, nor cows, nor sheep; there was no great orchard with old mossy apple trees and a cyder-press. There was no lime-tree arbour, nor filbert walk, nor nice fields with clipped hedges and white painted gates. There was nothing but a very quiet house standing in the street of a quiet little town, and at the back a pretty garden full of little flower-beds in the shapes of hearts, and stars, and diamonds, scattered about a smooth, closely shaven grass plot on which grew standard roses. The little heart, and star, and diamond-shaped borders were full of flowers; and below the grass plot was a little kitchen garden, in which grew peas and asparagus enough for the little dinners of "grandmamma at Ellingham" and sweet Aunt Emmeline. In this little garden it is true that there was a bower, but it was a very simple one, under an apple tree; a little trellis frame painted green, and wreathed with honeysuckle, in which was a little bench just big enough for two people to sit on. If they were stout people they would be obliged to sit very close together; but as Mary, when she was there, sat in it with Aunt Emmeline, there was plenty of room for them.

The house of "grandmamma at Ellingham," as I have said, was small; there was not a "big kitchen"

as well as a little one, and a dairy, and a cheese-chamber, and a new dining-room, and a so-called "counting-house," where the men's wages were paid on a Saturday night, as at Wilton, but only two parlours, in the larger of which they principally sat. This room was panelled with dark old oak, which was brown with age and bright with care. The crimson and dark green furniture might have added some little to its rather gloomy character, had not other objects made it, as it were, full of perpetual sunshine. Outside the window lay the pleasant flower-garden, and within the room sat grandmamma in her large tall crimson chair, with her back to the light, because the glare of the sunshine made her head ache. There she sat in her light silk shawl and spotlessly white cap and handkerchief, beside the old-fashioned fireplace, which was set round with Dutch tiles, and above which, on the high mantel-piece, stood a set of handsome China jars and a couple of curious Indian screens. And here and there and everywhere, like a spirit of light and love and joy, moved about sweet, young Aunt Emmeline, in her white dress and blue or pink ribbons; now watering her flowers, now engaged in some elegant female work, or reading in a pleasant book to the old lady, who, as she very rarely went out, seemed to be always sitting there, the image of contentment, knitting or netting, or doing something of that kind.

So much for Aunt Emmeline and "grandmamma

at Ellingham." We shall have, in the course of our story, to return to them. We shall have to sit with little Mary and her aunt in the bower, small as it is; and with the old grandmother in the oak-wainscoted parlour. We shall have to sow flower-seeds in the heart and star and diamond-shaped borders; to tie up the carnations, and to gather the falling rose leaves, and the spiked lavender, and the sweet heliotrope, and the clove pinks, and all other fragrant flowers for Aunt Emmeline's *pot pourri*. We shall have to sit down, with her and the old lady, to eat some of the green peas and asparagus, and some of the delicious apples which hung, like russety gold, above the little honeysuckle bower. All this we shall have to do, and a deal more, but it will not be just at this moment.

We must now introduce another group of Mary's friends, and then we have done.

Grandmama at Ellingham had a sister who lived in Lancashire; she, of course, was little Mary's great aunt. Mary had often heard of her, but as yet had never seen her; nay, even Mary's mother had only seen her a few times. She was reckoned a very clever woman; "grandmama at Ellingham" was always talking about her as a pattern of good management; she used to say that she never knew any one manage children so well as her sister Willoughby. She had had only one child, a son, who was now married, and with him and his wife Aunt Willoughby lived. They had no children of their

own, but had adopted an orphan nephew of young Mrs. Willoughby's, who was brought up with them; and often when "grandmamma at Ellingham" saw how indulgently Mary was treated, she used to shake her head and say "She hoped it would not spoil her, but it was very different to any of Aunt Willoughby's notions; and she was the best manager of children that ever was known."

Mary's mother, who always wished to do the very best she could for her little daughter, and who had read all kinds of books on education that she might be very perfect, often wished that she could see Aunt Willoughby and know exactly what her plans were; and Aunt Willoughby, who was very proud of her methods, had written to Mary's mother, as soon as her little daughter was born, a long letter of advice and instruction, which was intended to be a perfect system of education. But some way or other, although Mary's mother had such respect for her aunt, she could not act upon it. She therefore slid into the way that was the easiest and the most natural to her, and when Mary was seven years old, "grandmamma at Ellingham" held up her hands and shook her head, and wondered whatever her sister Willoughby would say if she could see the way in which Mary's mother spoiled her.

Aunt Willoughby, who heard from various relations about little Mary and how clever she was, and how she could read when she was four years

old, and how she drew very wonderful pictures at six, and how she wrote letters, and could read and understand Shakspere and the Bible, felt a great interest in her. At the same time she heard other things of which she highly disapproved; for instance, that Mary was allowed to see the company that came to the house, and "to talk politics" about O'Connell and Free Trade; to be always with her mother; and to make such a slave of her father, that he must be burdened with her even when he walked to Wilton; and many other such things, for which she said the parents were more to blame than the child.

In her zeal for "rightly bending the twig that the tree might be well inclined," she wrote to invite Mary and her mother to spend a few weeks with her. The invitation was accepted, but the visit was not paid, the journey being put off from winter to summer, and so on from year to year. In due course, however, it will fall upon me to give the particulars of this visit when it did take place.

And now having made you, my dear reader, acquainted, to a certain extent, with the grown-up people who might be considered as Mary's especial friends, we will return to her as we left her, either playing alone among the old wood in the draper's garden, or in her solitary yellow garret; or else reading the Bible and other large books in the parlour quietly with her mother.

CHAPTER V.

FROM FOUR TO NINE.

I MADE you acquainted with Mary when she was only four years old; time moves rapidly on the pages of a book, for now Mary was nine. At nine she cared neither for the imaginary terraces on the old timber, nor the orange trees in vases, which were represented by pots of poor man's pepper; nor yet about the rocking-horse in the yellow garret, where she had imagined herself a princess in a fairy tale.

No; Mary had grown out of these things now. But all the more did she read Shakspere, and the poets, and the Bible, and Sir Walter Scott, and great books of history and travels; and of all that she read, she conceived the idea, and often sketched with her pencil groups of figures or single heads, which greatly astonished her mother and all who saw them. Mary certainly was born to be an artist; she had a powerful imagination, and a knowledge of costume and character which was really astonishing in a child. Every body said she was a genius.

An artist, from London, came down to the town in which Mary's parents lived; and, as his family were acquainted with hers, he came occasionally to see them. To Mary he was an object of intense

interest. He painted real pictures, which were exhibited in the Royal Academy; he had studied under the first artists in London; and when she heard him talking to her parents about the fine pictures in the National Gallery and at Dulwich, Mary knew all about them, for she had studied long before the engravings of these galleries, and many others besides. This gentleman soon took great interest in the intelligent and very clever little girl that looked up with such admiring eyes to him; he talked to her about pictures, and allowed her to go and see him paint in the temporary studio which he had fitted up at his father's.

The effect on her mind was very great. The peculiarly managed light of the room; the beautiful casts that were placed about; a few of his own pictures which he had brought down, and an unfinished one, then in progress on the easel, affected her greatly. From that moment she resolved, child as she was, to study art, and day by day the knowledge she gained, and the designs for pictures which she made, were really astonishing.

But all the knowledge which she possessed had not been gained without a great sacrifice. The faint blush-rose that had tinted her cheek when she was four was now faded; she was so thin and extremely delicate, that no one believed she could live. Her large blue eyes looked, in moments of excitement, full of light and fire, that gave an intense beauty to their expression; and then again

they seemed to fade and dim as if the soul that animated them was wearied out. Mary's parents were very unhappy about her. Uncle Edward, Mr. Sunderland, and even poor Mr. Felton, grieved no less: the child whom they all loved so much, and of whom they were so proud, would die. No one could bear the thought of it, and all were doubly anxious to make her happy, and to show their affection to her.

Mary's mind had been too active for her body. She had studied at the time she ought to have played; she had lived too much among books and grown up people; she had not, in fact, been enough of a child. This is a sad mistake, one which is not unfrequently made: her mother had fallen into it, and now she thought of Aunt Willoughby and all her advice, and wondered whether it would have been better if she had followed it. However, something must now be done; Mary must put aside her books and all her studies, and must become, if possible, the lively and active child which she ought to have been years before. This learning to read at four had been worse than lost time; it had been purchased dearly, at the expense of health. Happily, however, the physician said that it was by no means too late; and now every body wished to make Mary, as much as might be, a child.

"Grandpapa and mamma at Wilton" begged that she might go to them, and be always in the fresh air and drink new milk; "Grandmama at Ellingham"

wished to have her there; and sweet Aunt Emmeline undertook to nurse her, and to endeavour to make her as lively as she was herself. The great aunt in Lancashire offered to take charge of her, as she understood the management of children so well; and young Mrs. Willoughby added a postscript to say, that the methods which had been used in the case of little Arthur, their adopted son, had been very successful; that in all respects she had followed her mother-in-law's advice, and therefore she recommended that Mary should be sent to them.

Uncle Edward and Mr. Sunderland, and poor old Mr. Felton, with tears in his eyes, begged of Mary's parents that they would not send her from home, nor entrust her to any body's care, but let her stay among them, and all would contribute to the well-being and amusement of the child who was so dear to all.

Mary's parents did not want urging to keep her among them. As soon, therefore, as spring came, and the rooks were building, and the violets budding under the hedges, they took a lodging in a country village, where it was intended that Mary should have free air and exercise, and begin in fact to be the real child, and to enjoy all that children must enjoy if they are to be healthy and really happy.

I should fill a whole page if I were now to tell the recipes that were sent to Mary's mother, for soups, and jellies, and condiments of all kinds, to

knit up the languid frame of the young invalid. Bark and quinine, and sarsaparilla, and camomile tea, and port wine, and isinglass jelly, and new laid eggs, and milk, and beef-tea, and hundreds of things beside were recommended. But Mary's mother wisely thought that there were remedies more powerful than medicine, and these she determined to try.

In one of the prettiest of country villages, about three miles from her home, Mary was now to be located; and if you, my dear readers, have any taste for humble cottage life, the cottage in which Mary and her mother may now be found would de light you. This cottage stood on a village green. In the middle of the green stood a gigantic old elm-tree, round the roots of which a bench was fixed, and here the old villagers sat in the evening, and the children played all day long. At the further end of the green was a picturesque old school-house, and the great handsome gates, surrounded with shrubbery and plantations, which led to the squire's house. Cottages of the most rustic and rural character, standing amid their gardens and orchards, surrounded three sides of this green; and on the fourth, at the distance of a narrow meadow scattered with trees, ran one of the noblest and most famous rivers of England.

Mary had often walked to this village with her parents and her uncle Edward, and had noticed a cottage with the honeysuckle covering its front,

without ever expecting that it would some time be her temporary home.

The people who lived here were basket-makers. There were besides themselves a son and a daughter; and as they had saved money, they had built, at one end of the cottage, a pretty little parlour and a chamber over it, and these were the rooms which Mary and her mother occupied.

We will pass over all the time of real anxiety about Mary's health, when Aunt Emmeline came to help to nurse her; and now, as the spring advances, and the hawthorn buds expand into white clusters of flowers, and the old crab-trees are garlanded with pink-tinged blossoms, we may see Mary riding on a pretty bay pony, called Fan, which "grandpapa at Wilton" sent over for her use as long as she needed it. That was, spite of the anxiety with which the year had begun, a very happy summer. Long excursions were made, in which Mary's parents, Aunt Emmeline, and sometimes Uncle Edward and Mr. Sunderland, accompanied them. Mary was, as much as ever, their companion; and seldom also was poor old Mr. Felton forgotten, for, during her illness, he had shown his devotion to her, and almost every day would walk over to the cottage to inquire after her, or to accompany her in her rides, if no one else were at liberty to do so.

Cheerful and regular exercise; fresh air; early hours, and absence of study, restored the health of

the child, and, in course of time, visits were talked of which were to ensure her that continued change of air and scene which was so desirable for her. But before we come to these we will give one summer-day at this village home.

CHAPTER VI.

RURAL LIFE.

The old basket-maker rented five little islands, which lay at about two miles' distance up the river. Three of these islands were used as willow holts, that is for the growth of osiers for making baskets; the other two were little green fields, the largest of them about three or four acres in extent, the grass of which was left to grow for hay. Nothing could be much prettier than this island; the river at this part was very broad; on the one side lay beautiful meadows, on the other, a hanging wood, which was called Sedley Grove. This grove extended for several miles, and came down to the very water's edge. Under the trees there was a road, which was one of the pleasantest that could be imagined.

One morning, it was in the middle of summer, Mary woke early. The sun was shining into the little chamber; the birds were singing; and the dusky-coloured tree spider was sitting in its web

in the apricot leaves that surrounded the window. Mary was impatient to be up; she said to herself, "This will be a happy day from morning till night!" At that moment the church clock struck six; and up she rose as brisk as a lark. She and Aunt Emmeline were going this day, with the basket-maker's family, to make hay in the island.

Like the rest of the party, they must have provisions for the day; so the little veal pie, and the gooseberry pasty, the bread and butter, the hard boiled eggs, and the cake were put into a basket. These were their eatables; as for water, there was plenty of that in the island. The old basket-maker, and his son and daughter, and the apprentice lad, who always went by the name of Billy-boy, and a village dame were the party. They were to go up the river to the island in a boat.

As they went along in the yet early morning, the sun shone bright and warm, and the dew was dry; yet still there was that delicious freshness and brightness in the air, which only belongs to the morning. Here and there they saw haymakers at their work—some working on in silence, others laughing and chattering at their work; then again, by the river side, there were herds of cattle standing in the water in beautiful groups—some lashing their sides with their tails, some, as if asleep, with their heads hanging down to the water. Mary and her aunt talked a deal about pictures as they went along, and let nothing escape them.

They noticed, at every bend of the river, the change in the landscape; they saw the heron slowly rising from her fishing station among the willows, and the fish leap out of the water after the flies, turning over their silvery bodies in the sunshine.

Whilst they were noticing these pleasant objects, the boat reached the little island, and, after being shoved into a willowy creek, they all landed. The hay was nearly made, and was now lying in little cocks on the light green grass; it was to be made that day into a little rick, to which was afterwards to be added the hay of another small island which lay higher in the river, and then the basket-maker's hay-harvest would be ended.

Mary's first feeling was delight; she ran about here and there; thought of Robinson Crusoe in his island, and wished, above all things, that she could have a little house there, and a little garden, and a little boat, and live there. After she and Aunt Emmeline had gone the circuit of the island, and had admired the beautiful white convolvulus which wreathed the willows and the wild roses, and after they had gathered a handful of these flowers, with which they garlanded Mary's broad hat and Aunt Emmeline's little straw bonnet, they began to search for a nest of young field mice. Mary, who had had wonderfully good luck with a tame sparrow since she came to Linford, was now bent on rearing some young field mice, which she hoped she could teach to know and to love her. The old

basket-maker had told her that the mowers had found several nests with young ones in, but that he feared some of the hawks, which came out of Sedley Grove, had carried them all off by that time to their young in the wood.

This search for field mice, which was all in vain, lasted so long that Mary was quite tired when it was over, and then sat down with Aunt Emmeline under the shade of some trees to rest. Mary thought it must be dinner time, but her aunt, to her surprise, told her it was only eleven o'clock, they therefore ate some of their cake, and sat in the shade talking of all the pleasant things around them. Mary lay with her head on her aunt's lap, listened to her pleasant voice, and between whiles heard the cooing of the wood-pigeons in the grove, and two cuckoos, one afar off and the other near, shouting as if to answer each other.

By this time Mary, who had been in a sort of little doze, woke up, and then she and her aunt amused themselves as they sat by watching little shining, blue, and green, and copper-coloured beetles creeping in the dry roots of the grass; and little yellow, green, and brown grasshoppers leaping about. Butterflies white, and brown, and red; and little moths, some black, and some dusky coloured, came flitting past them with a jumping sort of motion; and then they watched the dragon-flies, with their blue and green bodies, and large gauze wings, in

each of which was a large purple spot, and saw now and then a large yellow dragon-fly, which had a savage fierce look. Just at the moment when Mary was wondering why they were called *dragon-flies*, she cast her eye on a bush beside her, and saw one of them attacking a large, live, and slender-bodied gnat. He held the gnat by what seemed a pair of pincers, and was in the act of sucking his head. Mary saw, or imagined that she saw, why he had his name. She sent him off, therefore, in a great hurry, sorry that even a gnat should suffer on such a beautiful day.

Like the dragon-fly, Mary now was hungry, and though Aunt Emmeline told her that it was then only noon, yet she herself was quite willing that their little dinner should be arranged on the grass. Mary set all in order; the cake she had already eaten had made her thirsty, and looking about for a glass or mug, neither were to be found; they had been forgotten; she therefore ran to the haymaker's to borrow one of theirs, when, oddly enough, they told her that "somehow or other they had forgotten theirs, and that they, therefore, were obliged to drink out of a big pie-dish."

Mary and sweet Aunt Emmeline could not drink out of "a big pie-dish," that was certain; what then was to be done? Both Mary and her aunt hit on the same expedient at the same moment, which caused them a deal of laughter; they would drink out of an eggshell! and so they did.

After dinner, they thought they would help the haymakers, but it was so hot, that after they had worked a little while they went again in search of a shady corner, and on their way saw the old basket-maker fast asleep on a heap of hay in a charming nook. His example was quite inspiring; Aunt Emmeline insisted upon it that Mary should have a bed likewise; she carried some hay into the shade, and, spreading a large shawl, seated herself with Mary's head on her lap. Mary soon fell asleep, and Aunt Emmeline, I rather suspect, did the same; for I know that as she looked up through the network of leaves above her head into the clear blue sky, she saw the hawk hovering again as he had done when the old basket-maker said he had eaten up the young field mice. She watched how he poised himself in the air for a moment, and then made a circuit, and paused again; then descended a little, and balanced himself on his great wings, exactly in one spot, and then pounced down to the earth like a heavy stone dropped from a height, and again, in a moment or two, was sailing off to the wood with his prey. All this she saw, and thought about it; but when the wood-pigeons began to coo, she lost the consciousness of the wood, near which she sat, and seemed, all at once, to be sitting in the little bower under the apple tree in her mother's garden at Ellingham; and Mary's uncle Edward seemed to be standing beside her, and talking to her in a

low voice. It must have been the cooing of that wood-pigeon that put such a thought into her head, for Uncle Edward had never been at Ellingham in his life, and he knew nothing about the bower under the apple tree. I feel sure from this, that Aunt Emmeline must have dreamed.

When Mary woke they again walked round the island; and now the little flowers showed that the hour of noon was considerably past, for the white convolvulus was shut, and so was the yellow goat's-beard, which had spread its broad golden petals like a sun in the morning.

Another change had taken place; all the hay-cocks were gathered from the meadow, and the little rick had grown into very tolerable magnitude. The women were raking up the scattered remains from the grass, and the old basket-maker and his son, and Billy-boy, were just about setting off in the boat to bring down, from the yet smaller island, the little crop of hay there, which lay ready for their fetching, and which would thus, before the evening had closed in, complete the little hay-rick.

Mary and Aunt Emmeline, who had traversed the island till they "knew it by heart," determined to go too and fetch the hay, which seemed quite a pleasant Arcadian sort of excursion; but just as they were about to set off, they saw in the distance, advancing up the river, a gay little pleasure boat. It was not a very unusual thing to see a

pleasure boat on this beautiful river, and the sight alone would not have detained them, had not certain sounds caught their ear; these were the hooting of owls, which seemed to come directly from Sedley Grove. The old basket-maker, his son, and Billy-boy stared in amazement; it was so early in the day for owls! But scarcely had their wonder found words, when cocks began to crow, dogs to bark, and sheep to bleat; and then a peal of merry laughter succeeded. One mystery was cleared up, but another began. The owls, the cocks, the dogs, the sheep, were no other than Mr. Sunderland. But what in the world had brought Mr. Sunderland there? They did not know even that he was in the neighbourhood; and now the boat was near enough for them to see that it contained Mary's father and mother, Mr. Sunderland, Uncle Edward, and even poor old Mr. Felton. Mary's father and uncle were rowing, Mr. Sunderland sat at the helm, and Mr. Felton was busied with something in the bottom of the boat. No sooner had the new comers arrived than the basket-maker's old boat set off on its business expedition, and Mary and Aunt Emmeline, you may be sure, had plenty to do in receiving this unexpected party and welcoming the two strangers, Uncle Edward and Mr. Sunderland, whom they had not seen for several months.

The afternoon was so delightful, and the river so attractive, that after the little party had gone

the round of the island and held a consultation as to the best place for taking tea, conveniences and material for which they had abundantly brought with them in the boat, they determined to row still higher on the river; to call at the little island whence the hay was to be fetched; to land at the gypsum rocks under Sedley Grove, about a mile higher up, and to look for some curious botanical specimens which were to be found there; and if they did not meet with any more attractive situation for taking tea in, then to return again to this first island and enjoy it there.

No sooner was Mary seated than she saw her old friend Mr. Felton once more on his knees at the bottom of the boat, busied over a mysterious something, the like of which she had never seen. The good old man, who was right glad to find her interested in any thing that belonged to him, told her that it was a *peripeurater*, and had been lent to him by an acquaintance of his, a poor shoemaker, who had a great turn for mechanics and chemistry, and that he had made it himself. It was a sort of portable fire machine, and by the help of it the kettle was to be boiled for the tea which they were that evening to drink. Mary, who had pictured to herself their kettle boiling in gypsy fashion, suspended from a tripod of three sticks in the wood, was a little disappointed at first. It was not long, however, before Mr. Felton talked her into an enthusiasm as great as his own about his

peripeurater. He confided to her that he feared something was wrong about it, but that as Mr. Edward and Mr. Sunderland made such fun of it, and prophesied that it would not succeed, he wished to give it a trial before they reached land, and therefore he had fixed the kettle, as she saw, and was now doing his utmost to set it properly a-going.

The party in the boat were fortunately very much occupied by themselves, and left the eldest and the youngest to their anxious labours. Mr. Felton made the most persevering attempts to get the machine properly regulated, but either he did not understand it, or the thing was out of order, for burn it either would not, or else it flared away like a mad thing, and sent forth such quantities of smoke as made poor Mr. Felton's face as black as that of a chimney-sweeper; while, at the same time, he was so hot that he looked more like a blacksmith at his forge than an old gentleman on a pleasure tour. Spite of the heat and the pother, Mary sat patiently beside him; first suggesting this, and then that, with marvellously little knowledge of the matter, as may be supposed, and becoming in the mean time nearly as grim as Mr. Felton himself. Among her other suggestions was that of asking council from Mr. Sunderland or her papa, whom she knew from experience to be equal to any difficulty; but Mr. Felton confided to her in a whisper, that these two gentlemen had been laughing so

mercilessly at the machine that it was better to say nothing to them.

Up the river they went, past the little willowy island where their friend the basket-maker and his party were busy getting the hay into the boat, and, without more than a passing greeting, still rowed onward. Presently they came to that part of the river which lay below Sedley Hall, and which here made a beautiful sweep among woods and plantations. To the right an artificial cut branched off like a lesser river, and ran to a little distance amongst woods and little green pasture fields, to supply a line of fish-ponds. Nothing could be more beautiful than this bit of river scenery; it was so quiet and picturesque, so like many a little scene in Bewick. Before them towered up, above the now receding grove, the handsome hall of Sedley, upon the windows of which the declining sun cast a golden light. At this point Mary forgot all about the *peripeurater*, in the ecstacy of delight at a new object of beauty. The little artificial river was covered with water-lilies—one complete mass of them, like cups of silver among emerald dishes, as Mary said. The slanting sun shot its long golden beams among and between the scattered Spanish chestnut and bay-trees, the remains of a plantation of former days. The grass of the little pasture field was as green as grass could be, and every body agreed that no pleasanter place than this could be found for their tea.

Here, however, one difficulty was soon discovered. On the property of Sir Edmund Sedley they might not set up a rustic tripod to boil their kettle; and yet, where was there so beautiful a spot for the purpose! They must leave it, however, and return to the island for tea, where the old basket-maker, the "Lord of the Isles," as Mary called him, would set up their tripod for them, if need were, instead of opposing it.

All this time poor old Mr. Felton had the boat to himself, and having, as he said, plenty of elbow room, he had set his fire-machine a-going, spite of smoke and flame, and now the kettle was singing merrily, and sending steam from its spout, and even from under the lid. Mary, as we know, had left him for the water-lilies, of which she could not get enough; and after that she had run off with Mr. Sunderland, who was as full of fun as a lad, to look at a hedgehog which he had found under a tall holly-tree. By the time the kettle was boiled she came back to the boat, and was the first to learn the good tidings. Without a moment's loss of time, therefore, she and her old friend set about making preparations, and, with the help of Mr. Sunderland, who had sung a merry impromptu song in praise of the machine, they had the tea-things set out and tea brewing in the tea-pot, the cake cut in slices, and every thing ready to be eaten and enjoyed, when the company returned, to go off, as they supposed, to the island.

Everybody was delighted. Mary and Mr. Felton washed their hands and faces, leaning over the side of the boat; they looked no longer like either chimney-sweepers or blacksmiths, and the merriment and delight of the whole party was without bounds. Never, since tea was made in a tea-pot, had such tea as that been drunk, and as to the cake and the bread and butter, nobody had ever eaten such before. There were two bottles of wine in the boat besides the tea, and another great cake, and a cold tongue, and a loaf of bread, which were intended for supper, if they chose to stay out as long.

When tea was over they set out again; and as poor old Mr. Felton had no longer occasion to trouble himself about his fire-machine, he was now able thoroughly to enjoy himself. They landed, as they proposed, at the gypsum cliffs, and gathered the most beautiful specimens of the curious plant they wanted, which greatly pleased Mary's father and uncle. When they were ready to set off again, neither Mr. Sunderland nor good old Mr. Felton were to be found. The others ran about and shouted, and looked here and there, but they were nowhere. The sun was declining, and the beautiful moon, then nearly at full, was slowly ascending on the other side of the heavens; the wood-pigeons were cooing and the owls were hooting. At first every body supposed that these were Mr. Sunderland; but as he did not make his

appearance, and they still kept hooting and cooing on, everybody decided that they were only birds.

While they were thus waiting at the river's edge for their two missing companions, a little troop of children came down the wood. They had been out at field-labour all day, weeding corn and such like. There were five of them, two little lads, and two girls, the eldest of whom carried a baby. They had in their hands their baskets and basins in which they had taken out their dinners, but they were now quite empty. Mary and Aunt Emmeline knew them again; they were children from Linford, who went every day three miles to their labour, young as they were, and then back. They said that they worked for a large farmer at Linford, who had also a tillage-farm at Sedley, and that they earned from four pence to six pence a day. Two of them were the children of the poor Widow Brooks, who was hay-making in the island with the basket-maker; the other three children belonged to an equally poor family in Linford; the baby was theirs, and the eldest girl, its sister, said she took it out with her every day that their mother might be able to earn all she could in the harvest, for their father was ill "in a waste." It was a melancholy history, and filled Mary's heart with love towards them. She wished to do them a kindness; they had been out all day hard at work, and were tired; she asked her mother, therefore, to let them go home in their boat, and she herself, and her uncle, and

Mr. Sunderland, she was sure, would walk to make room, that papa and Mr. Felton could row, and Aunt Emmeline would steer. Her mother thought the idea a good one, and so did everybody; but the poor children, who seemed rather confused by all this kind interest, declined it. The eldest girl, who did most of the talking, said that her mother, who was working in the island, had told them to come and wait under the grove opposite the island, and, may be, the basket-maker would let them all go down the river with him in the boat, and therefore they must make haste, lest they should be too late. As that was the case, Mary's father said that they should at once get into the boat, and that he and Uncle Edward would row them down to the island, when they would be sure to be in time. Everybody was pleased, especially the poor tired little day-labourers, though they did not dare to say so. Mary's mother held the baby while the biggest girl got into the boat; and then, when all the little tired company, with their empty baskets and basins, were safely in, she gave the baby into the arms of the sister, whose cheeks were now crimson with pleasure. There never was such a shame-faced yet happy little company. They never had been in a grand green pleasure-boat before. To them it was the same, as it would have been to Mary, if the Queen had taken her to sail in her yacht.

Just as they were going to set off, Mr. Sunder-

land and old Mr. Felton came down the steep road in the wood, laughing and talking as merrily as could be. They carried between them a large market-basket full of ripe cherries, which they had bought in the village from a cottage dame. Mr. Sunderland saw her standing at her cottage door with this great basket of cherries at her feet, and with great tears running down her old cheeks. He asked her what was amiss, and then she told him that the carrier had gone without her basket of cherries, and now she did not know what to do with them; she had no way of sending them to market; nobody wanted to buy them in the village; she was just come back from the hall, where she had carried them herself, heavy as they were; but they would not buy them. It was just so much lost money to her, for if she kept them they would spoil, and she wanted the money to pay her rent; and when she had thus told the history of her trouble, the tears again began to flow, and she took up her checked apron to wipe them away.

Poor old Mr. Felton, who very often knew what a trouble it was to get the money ready for his own rent, condoled with the old woman; and Mr. Sunderland, always energetic in every thing he did, said that he would buy all the cherries, and the basket also, or how else could he get them down to the boat. The bargain was soon made, and the poor woman was now just as ready to cry for joy as the minute before for sorrow. She had not words to

express her gratitude; tired as she was, she begged to carry the basket down to the boat for him, but that they would not hear of; and this circumstance now explains to you why our friends at the river-side saw them coming down this steep road with the huge basket of cherries between them.

The basket was heaved into the boat; Mr. Felton seated himself at the helm, and Uncle Edward and Mary's father taking each an oar, away shot the green pleasure-boat, and the poor children's faces flushed into a rosy redness with delight.

When the little party that had to walk under the grove arrived opposite the island, they found Uncle Edward waiting for them in the boat. The five children, tired as they had seemed at first, were now scattered about the pretty little island gathering dew-berries which they knew, although Mary did not, grew at the further end among the willows. The hay-makers, who had found the fetching of the hay from the upper island a longer job than they expected, were yet a long way from finishing. Uncle Edward, Mary's papa, and Mr. Felton, therefore, set to work to help them, whilst Mary's mother, Aunt Emmeline, and Mr. Sunderland were talking about a little scheme which they had thought of in their walk.

This was to have a little harvest supper in the island, and to feast the poor children, if they could do no more. It was a charming idea; the baskets were brought out of the boat, a cloth spread on

the grass, the loaf and the tongue sliced into sandwiches, and the large home-made cake cut up. They had only wine to drink, and that was a pity; wine and water would do, but milk would have been better. It was nearly half a mile to the nearest farm-house, and that, Mary's mother thought, made a great difficulty; Mr. Sunderland, however, thought it made none; he leaped into the boat, pushed himself across the narrow channel, and ran up the grove in the direction of the farm-house.

The poor children, who knew nothing of all the good that was in store for them, had, as I told you, set off in search of dew-berries, great quantities of which they found; and as the baby was now wrapped up in a shawl on some hay, the eldest girl, who seemed the cleverest of the party, made a pretty sort of rural basket of oak-leaves, linked curiously together with their stems, in which she put the dew-berries, and then timidly offered them to Mary, while the other children stood at a distance to watch how they were received. Mary, who had never seen dew-berries before, was delighted to have these, which she added to the little entertainment which was arranged on the grass.

Before any body could have thought of such a thing Mr. Sunderland was back again, bringing with him not only the milk, which was contained in a large stone bottle, but a brown loaf, a piece of cheese, and a stone bottle of ale also. All these things he had bought, and had hired a boy to

carry for him. Every body, he said, should have a good supper, as well as the children, and here were the materials for it. Mary's parents, Uncle Edward, Aunt Emmeline, and, above all, Mr. Felton approved; and as all the hay was now nearly piled upon the rick, and nothing remained but to rake up the scattered remains and to thatch the rick, which would not be done for a fortnight at least, every body was ready to eat and drink and enjoy themselves before they went home.

The news of a general invitation soon spread among the hay-making company. The basket-maker and his son and daughter joined the party; so did Mrs. Brooks, poor widow though she was, and her two children; and the three children of the sick father, and Mary, and her parents, and Uncle Edward, and Aunt Emmeline, and Mr. Sunderland, and Mr. Felton, and Billy-boy, all seated themselves on the grass, which, I am glad to say, was not, for a wonder, dewy this evening; while the broad summer moon was shining above them and the voices of the night birds, sounding out of the grove opposite, and the river flowing audibly beside them.

Every body was happy; and when, after all had eaten to their heart's content, and the poorer guests had thought that they had never eaten any thing half so good before, and after Mary's mother had inquired from widow Brooks about the sick father of the three children, and had heard that wine was

recommended for him, but that they were too poor to buy any, and after those two bottles of wine which they had brought with them, but had not opened, were given to Mrs. Brooks for him, with a promise from Mary's mother that she would call on him very soon; then, when after all this, Mr. Sunderland told one of his very funniest stories, in which he ventriloquized and sung a song, and altered his voice a dozen times at least, you may be quite sure that it was one of the pleasantest suppers that ever was eaten in a hayfield.

When all this was over it was time for them to go home. The party broke up. The haymakers and the poor children went off as happy as could be in the larger boat, and Mary and her friends followed after, floating calmly down the river with scarcely the use of an oar. Aunt Emmeline and Uncle Edward sang beautiful songs, and Mary lay with her head on her mother's knee, watching the stars that were becoming visible in the dark blue summer sky.

CHAPTER VII.

MARY THE TEACHER.

Such was one of the many pleasant days which Mary spent at Linford. A day or two afterwards Aunt Emmeline left and returned to Ellingham,

taking with her a promise that Mary should visit her in the following summer. When her aunt was gone Mary's mother was with her altogether, and very soon after she came she and her little daughter went to see the sick father of the three children. Besides these she found other two children, for whom there was no employment in the fields, and who ran about idly all day with sunburnt hair and ragged frocks. They did not go to school because their parents could not afford it. There was every token of extreme poverty in the house; the sick man was beyond the power of medicine or of wine. The wife and the elder children supported the family, and the unemployed children attended to the father.

When they left the cottage they spoke of the children, and Mary then proposed to her mother a little scheme which had entered her head, and now filled her mind with great enthusiasm. She was not at this time allowed to study; she learnt nothing herself, and she would like very much to teach. Would her mother let her have these two little children for her own scholars? she would teach them to read, and to sew, and they would mend their old frocks, and she would teach them to be clean and neat. She should enjoy it very much, and she would make the children love her, and would try to do them good.

Her mother had no objection to the plan, not the least in the world, but yet before she gave her

full consent she made her little daughter take several things into consideration; first, that it would really be a troublesome undertaking; she must devote at least two hours every day to the children, if she would do them any good; and in a little while she might grow tired and wish she could get rid of her task. She must carefully consider all this, because it would be very unkind to the children to give them the expectation of a benefit which, after all, she might not have perseverance enough to carry out; and that if she really began it her mother would expect her to do her utmost, and to persevere in it as long as she remained in Linford.

Mary, who perfectly understood the view her mother took of it, was of course quite too enthusiastic, at the moment, to think it possible that she should ever tire; she would like to have undertaken a school of a dozen children, instead of two. However she consented, at her mother's wish, to take till the following day to consider of it.

On the following day her mind was as determined as ever, and she and her mother went to propose the plan to the poor family. It was joyfully accepted by the parents; the father needed but little attention; the children played out of the house the greater part of the day, so that he would not miss them. Every afternoon, from two to four, Mary was now to have her two little scholars. There were no ragged schools in those days; they

were hardly thought of at that time, little Mary's was, perhaps, one of the first of its class.

Sweet Aunt Emmeline, who would have been an excellent seconder of Mary's plans, was gone back to Ellingham as we know, therefore Mary took council with her mother in all she did. The children were wild and shy, and somewhat frightened at first; however, in a day or two all went on tolerably smoothly. They were well washed, and made perfectly clean; they did their best to learn to read, and Mary, who had patience for any difficulty, fancied them most docile scholars. The greatest difficulty occurred, however, where Mary least looked for it, and that was with regard to the sewing; in needlework she herself did not at all excel; and, therefore, the mending of these old frocks was a most bewildering and perplexing piece of work. Mary's mother had furnished a quantity of pieces of print and calico, with needles, thread, and pins; and she promised Mary, that if she could manage to make these old frocks tidy for every-day wear, she would buy the material for Sunday frocks, which she would cut out, and they should make among them. This was a great stimulus, but still poor Mary's awkwardness and want of experience puzzled her sorely, and made her at times almost despair.

A very unlooked for help, however, presented itself in this "sewing and shaping line," and that was no other than poor, old Mr. Felton. To

Mary's astonishment, he understood how to set on a patch in the neatest possible manner; he even aspired to joining the pattern. How he had gained all this knowledge she never cared to inquire: it was sufficient for her that he had it, and both she and the poor children now took sewing-lessons from him.

Mary's scholars progressed wonderfully; the eldest made rapid progress with her reading, and so well did the sewing succeed, that in less than a month the new frocks were made, and the mother was permitted to send various clean but ragged garments to be well mended by the children. Mr. Felton was in his element; seldom a day passed but he was with them punctually at two o'clock, as he said, to help Mary, lest the fatigue should be too great for her. The youngest girl, though two years younger than Mary, soon showed such aptitude with her needle that she could do any thing; and, with the help of Mr. Felton, they made the poor father a flannel shirt, which was a great comfort to him. The neatness which was required from these children seemed to influence the rest of the family; all were desirous of having their tattered garments mended, and Mr. Felton spent many hours over them in their own poor cottage. Somebody said that, as Mr. Felton was so clever with his scissors and needle, he must have been a tailor in his prosperous days, and very probably he had.

The poor father grew worse as the summer drew to a close, and Mr. Felton was found to be the greatest comfort that ever entered beneath that humble roof. Spite of his really weak sight, he might be seen, with two pair of spectacles on, reading to him in the Bible such beautiful consolatory passages as he knew, by the experience of his own sorrowful life, were capable of affording comfort even in the hour of death. The poor family had found a friend indeed, and one who being in poverty himself could be the recipient of all their troubles, and could sympathize with them, as only the fellow sufferer can; whilst, from his superior knowledge and experience, he could advise and direct them much better than one who had always been of their own class could do. For the last day and night of the poor sufferer's life Mr. Felton never left his bedside; and when he was dead he set about to make the parish funeral as respectable as possible. He was not ashamed of begging for them; and by the help of Mary's mother and her friends a variety of old black garments were furnished, which by his skill and contrivance furnished tidy mourning for every member of the family; and then, to complete his work of charity, he undertook to raise a little subscription to purchase a mangle, and as the mother was a good washerwoman, and the elder children docile and active, there seemed to be a prospect of better days dawning upon them.

All this, however, was the work of months; and I must now return to Mary and the pleasant autumn days which were spent at Linford. She rode about on her pony, often accompanied by her father. They made the most charming excursions that could be imagined, and while her health improved in this more active and natural kind of life every one saw that her mind would lose nothing by thus, as it were, lying fallow. It filled her mother's heart with a thankful joy to see her when she returned from these pleasant rides, in her little hat and habit, her long curls tightly braided to her head, with the rose once more on her cheek, and the sparkle of health and enjoyment in her eye. The rose, it is true, paled after the excitement was over, but the solid benefit was there; the seed of health was sown, and with it a more active, healthful state of feeling. She no longer sat bending over her books or her drawings, with her whole soul absorbed in one idea, and made peevish or unhappy by any interruption, till at length subdued by very weariness—the unnatural weariness of the overworked brain in the child—she would throw herself on her couch, and toss about in troubled and fevered dreams, which deprived sleep of all repose.

Very different was Mary now; cheerful books were read; cheerful and varied occupation filled every hour of the day. Exercise and fresh air, and cold water were the only stimulants—the only

medicines that were used; and the child was once more a child, happy from morning till night, full of intelligence and benevolence, and, with a fund of knowledge and experience in her own young heart and brain, was one of the most delightful companions, either to her parents or others. She still drew, but it was in moderation, and the walls of the basket-maker's cottage bore evidence to the skill of her youthful pencil. She learned, too, to make baskets from the old man and his son, which she soon could do so cleverly, that when she had made a dozen of different sizes she sent out one of her little scholars into some of the neighbouring villages to sell them, and thus obtained four shillings, which she had the pleasure of giving to the poor family. It was the first money she had ever earned, and it gave her a great idea of the pleasure of labour which produces a return.

CHAPTER VIII.

MARY IS AGAIN A TEACHER.

THE corn-harvest as well as the hay-harvest was finished; the corn which Mary had seen in early ear she had watched ripening day by day; from green it had turned to pale yellow, and then to a deep russet gold. She had seen it with its heavily

laden heads swaying before the sweeping breeze that passed over it; she had walked among it with those who were dearest to her on earth, and had plucked the ears as she went along, and rubbed them in her hands as the disciples of Christ, that beloved Master and Teacher of us all, had done nearly two thousand years ago, on a certain Sabbath-day, when the Pharisees and other censorious people blamed them as if they had committed a great sin. This she had done; and had talked with her mother of that beautiful and simple incident in the Gospel; and then, going back to still older times, had remembered the little son of the good Shunammite, who went out at the time of barley-harvest to his father in the fields, and was taken ill there, and carried home by a lad to his mother, when he lay on her knee till evening and then died; then how the good Prophet of Carmel was fetched by the sorrowful mother, and, by a miracle of God's power, the child was restored to life. They talked of Ruth, how she, living in poverty with her mother-in-law, who had once been rich, went gleaning in the harvest-fields of a wealthy kinsman, who, riding among his reapers, saw the beautiful young woman, and inquired about her, and, when he heard how good she was, he married her.

I think I told you how much Mary had read in the Bible even when she was a very little child. Her parents loved this holy book themselves. Her

dear grandmother at Wilton used to read it to her father when he was a boy; and, when Mary was a very little child, she could remember sitting on her father's knee, and hearing him tell or read the old stories about the patriarchs, who lived like kings in the beautiful land of the East, and had flocks, and herds, and much cattle; and about the flood, and the dove that went out of the ark, and returned with an olive-leaf, the lovely emblem of peace; and of the rainbow which spanned the heavens and encircled the green earth, and was a sign of hope and promise from God to man.

But, if I were to go through all the beautiful stories in the Bible which Mary loved, I should never have finished. Her father had a very large Dutch Bible in three volumes, which was full of fine pictures, and these she used to study very attentively. Sometimes her father would look them through with her, and then they became still more interesting, because he knew all the old histories so well, and could explain them to her. If Mary and her father delighted in the picturesque stories of Palestine, and the kings, and prophets, and poets of old, she and her mother loved most to talk and read of Christ and his divine life and precepts. Many an evening had they sat together in the old house in the town, and read of some beautiful act of mercy; some parable which embodied in itself whole volumes of wisdom and love, some sermon on the mount, or miracle by

the sea, until, like the disciples who walked with the divine Master to Emmaus, their hearts burned within them, for his spirit indeed was with them, as his sacred presence had been with the disciples, although at the time they knew it not. Those were happy hours which the mother and child thus spent together, and the little prayer which Mary never failed to say on going to bed seemed after such times a double communion with Heaven. I do not at all wonder that Mary, glancing up from her pillow, fancied that the little cherub-faces on the ceiling were indeed celestial countenances looking down in love upon her.

I wish all dear children could be brought up in such an atmosphere of love and peace as was Mary Leeson—and then, avoiding the mistake which her affectionate and over-anxious mother made in one instance, but hastened to remedy as soon as she knew it, what pure and noble character, what high principle and unostentatious benevolence might not affectionate parents live to rejoice in! Then, indeed, would their children be crowns of glory to their old age!

As I told you, the corn-harvest was finished, but not without Mary having had her enjoyment in it; she saw the reapers at work, and walked among the sheaves, and studied the peculiar flowers that grow in the corn, the cockle, the scarlet poppy, which the country people call "head-aches," from their overpowering smell, and the little scarlet

pimpernel which lies close to the ground. When the sheaves were carried away, she went into the fields with the gleaners, and gleaned among them, taking care always to give her gleanings to some very old woman or hungry-looking child among them, that thus she might have the pleasure of doing them a little kindness and showing them her good-will.

The time was now at hand for Mary to return to her own home in the town; just before she left, however, she had a little adventure, which I must relate to you.

One day she and her father were strolling about one of the large pasture meadows near the river, when Mary suddenly picked up a silver watch. It was a well-made and apparently nearly new watch in a case, with a ribbon and key. The surprise and joy which she felt nobody can imagine. To whom could it belong, and how did it come there? The ribbon was rather old, and the watch, though a good one and nearly new, was of an old-fashioned make; it belonged, no doubt, to some working man in the town, some hard-working artizan, most probably, who had thus had a great loss, and no doubt was much distressed on its account. Mary's first feeling, after her surprise, was the delight she would have in returning it to its proper owner, to find out whom every effort must now be made.

In the course of the day old Mr. Felton came over, and of course this strange event was told to

him, and he undertook to find out, if possible, the person to whom it belonged. The watch, as I told you, had a case, and, curiously enough, no maker's name on it. There was, however, a watch paper, bearing the printed name of a watch-maker in the town, and to him Mr. Felton was sent to make inquiries.

This person told him that the watch, which he had taken with him, belonged to a young man in the town, an artizan, the son of an artizan, who had saved some money by a long life of industry and care. He was, however, a very stern and severe man, as all his acquaintance knew; and though he had given this watch to his son, which seemed kind, yet that the son was very much afraid of his father, and no doubt would have to suffer much from his severity if he knew of his loss.

From the watchmaker's Mr. Felton went to the house of this young artizan. He lived with his father; the mother was dead; and, as it was evening when he got there, the two were sitting together at supper. The old man, who, in his way, was polite enough to strangers, asked Mr. Felton to sit down and join them, adding, that his son Joe was sadly out of sorts about something, he couldn't tell what, but he hadn't eaten any thing for several days; he hoped he hadn't got into any mischief; for he had always kept a tight hand on Joe, and always meant to do so; by which he in-

tended to imply that Joe had not much mercy to expect at his hands.

Joe, who knew this well enough, got up from the little supper table and stood against the mantel-piece, resting his head on his hand and looking very unhappy. Mr. Felton joined the father at the supper, and the son, declining to eat on the plea that he did not feel hungry, soon after left the room. The father, like Mr. Felton, was a politician, and they two had a deal of talk. Unlike our old friend, however, he was a man of violent and bitter temper; he would not believe that any body had any goodness in them; and, among other things, he said that, if a person found what was not their own, they would not return it except for a reward. Mr. Felton, who knew about Mary and the watch, longed to prove his words false, but he did not dare to do so, because he then should have to tell about his son's carelessness, which would make him very angry.

After supper Mr. Felton left this unamiable old man, intending to see the son alone the next day; fortunately, however, he saw him in the court in which they lived, and asked him to walk on with him a little way. He then spoke to him of his dejected air, and asked, as if quite accidentally, if he had lost any thing which preyed on his mind. At this question the young man suddenly stopped, and inquired so eagerly whether *he* had found *any thing*, that Mr. Felton was sure he was the

owner of the watch. He said he knew somebody that had, and then asked the young man to describe what he had lost. He did so; and to the minutest particular it was the silver watch which Mary had found. Mr. Felton told him who had found it and where; and the young man then explained that he had been to bathe in the river, when the owner of some fisheries below, who wanted to put a stop to all bathing, and who employed police even to take people into custody, had come up suddenly to seize him, and he, dreading his father's displeasure if he got into any scrape, even innocently, with the police, had run away half dressed, and in his flight had lost his watch in the very field, as he supposed, where Mary had found it. He had, he said, gone day by day ever since into that field, and hunted about, but in vain, to find it, and now it was impossible for him to express his joy in hearing of its recovery; he hoped, above all things, he said, that its loss would never come to his father's knowledge, who would not easily forgive him.

Mr. Felton promised that his father should know nothing of it from him, and, bidding him go on the following day to the house of Mary's parents, told him the watch should be restored to him. The young man, who had imbibed from his father's teaching some of his opinions, believed that nobody would restore any thing of value which they had found without a reward, and

therefore was now in a great difficulty as to the means of raising the money for this purpose. Five pounds he supposed might be required; and, as he afterwards told Mr. Felton, he never slept all that night for thinking of some scheme for raising the money. Early in the morning, therefore, before his father was up, he tied his best clothes, which were very good, into a bundle, his shirts and shoes into the bargain, and took them to a pawnbroker's, who gave him the money upon them, and, at the time appointed, he presented himself at Mary's house with the five pounds in his pocket.

Mary and her mother, who left Linford that day, of course had the watch ready for him. The young man looked greatly agitated, and so did Mary, when they met, she with the watch in her hand, and he with a pocket-book, which he took from the breast-pocket of his fustian working-jacket—if he had not pawned his best clothes, he would have come in them. Mary wondered he did not take the watch at once; she saw tears of joy actually in his eyes, and yet he was busied over his pocket-book, from which he was taking out papers. "Of course you want a reward, Miss," said he, rather awkwardly; for Mary's eagerness to give him the watch astonished him. "No! I don't want any reward," said Mary; "I never thought of such a thing!"

"Oh, Miss! I have brought five pounds—per-

haps you 'll take two, as you hadn't much trouble about it."

"I shall not take any money," said Mary, laying the watch on the table, and feeling a little disappointed, she hardly knew why. "I never thought of having any reward;—I only felt so pleased that you should have your watch again!"

The young man looked at Mary's mother, but she reiterated her little daughter's words, saying that, according to their ideas, an honest person would never be satisfied without returning what he had found to its rightful owner, and that he would require no reward for such an action. The young man was surprised; it was a mode of reasoning to which he was unaccustomed. He felt exceedingly grateful; it would almost have been a relief to him if Mary would have taken his money: but she had her reward in seeing the undisguised joy with which, when he had again put up his money, he took the watch into his hand, looked on its face, as he would no doubt have done on the face of a long-lost friend, and then put it into his waistcoat pocket.

Mary was very happy, and when, that same evening, Mr. Felton told her how the money had been raised, she was doubly thankful that she had not taken one penny of it.

The young man, however, insisted on Mr. Felton having ten shillings at least, which he, poor as he was, likewise refused, greatly to the astonish-

ment of the young man, who never till then believed that there was such a thing as disinterested honesty; or that any body would do that which was right merely for its own sake, and without looking for a reward. Whether he informed his father of this new knowledge which he had gained I never knew; very likely he did not, for the father, through his harshness and bitterness, had inspired his son's heart only with fear.

CHAPTER IX.

MARY AT THE FAIR.

They were now at home again. It was the month of October; days were growing shorter; the evenings and mornings were cold; the pony, which had been such a delight to Mary at Linford, was sent back to Wilton, but not without many tears at parting, and kisses even, which Mary bestowed upon its beautiful face and neck. She was again a dweller in the town, looking out from the windows of her home into a busy street, with its trading population, instead of upon a village green, with a spreading tree, under which children played, and old men rested from their labours.

Mary's health was so much improved, that although as much country air as possible was still

prescribed for her for the next twelve months at least, with the extremest moderation in all her studies, lessons were again leisurely commenced. The diversion and relaxation of mind which she had enjoyed at Linford made her take more pleasure than ever she had done in them before, as well as in outward objects, and the ordinary pleasures and occupations of childhood, and thus her sphere of enjoyment was greatly increased.

In the town where Mary lived was an extremely fine spacious market-place, where every kind of article was sold in the open air, on covered stalls, or even under huge umbrellas, which had very much the appearance of little tents. There was something very picturesque and amusing in these markets, which, of course, were frequented by people from the neighbouring villages, who brought in their little wares to sell. Another feature of the town, or rather its outskirts, was the innumerable quantities of gardens which surrounded it. The hill sides were covered with them, and they belonged to the operatives, or working people of the town. All were fenced in, many with hawthorn hedges, and little narrow paths intersected them, where, if you walked, you had the pleasure of seeing, early in a morning and late at night, before and after work hours, the poor man and his family toiling in this little piece of ground, cultivating flowers, often of the most splendid kinds, and vegetables for their own eating. Of course, where there was such

a general love of gardening, there would be a great demand for flower-roots and plants of every description. Therefore, in spring, the weekly market, of which I have spoken, was like a great flower show.

At this season Mary's father used to take her very often into the market, and show her the beautiful flowers, which he admired as much as she did. Besides regular garden flowers, there were people who sold every variety of beautiful wild flowers—arums, and cowslips, and primroses, and oxlips, and fritillaries, and orchises; sometimes also curious fly and bee orchises, which were brought from the Peak of Derbyshire. Besides these wild-flower sellers, there were boys with birds' nests and eggs, and in these Mary's father took the greatest interest. He had himself made a collection of every variety of British birds' eggs, which he had in a cabinet; and even some of the most beautiful and curious of their nests. It often made Mary sorry to think of all the trouble the poor little birds had taken to make their nests and lay their eggs, for no other purpose, as it seemed, than for boys to sell to the townspeople, who seldom knew much about them.

Besides these markets once a week, which, however, were only interesting to Mary in the spring, there was, in the month of October, a great annual fair, which lasted nearly a fortnight. In ancient times this fair was of great importance, because to

it manufacturers of all kinds brought their goods, stores of which the shopkeepers laid in for the next twelve months. In time, however, there was a greater demand for goods than could be supplied once or twice a year, and manufacturers took to sending out their travellers for orders, or shopkeepers sent them by letter, and thus the great fair decreased in importance. Still, however, it was kept up with a deal of bustle; tradespeople of all kinds, often the shopkeepers of the town, opened large booths and displayed their wares; cutlers from Sheffield, with cutlery; lacemen from Nottingham, hosiers from Derby and Leicester. The Yorkshireman brought his cloth and his Barnsley linen; and the West of England-man his woollen cloths likewise; there were earthenware dealers from the Staffordshire potteries; and toymen from Tunbridge Wells — whether they really did come from those places I cannot tell; the great placards and signs that they hung out said so, and the country people believed it. This fair was opened, or proclaimed, as it was called, with a deal of ceremony, by the mayor and aldermen, who walked in procession in their robes, with a mace and other signs of authority borne before them; and then, presenting themselves on an elevated stage raised for the occasion, trumpets were blown, the charter of the fair was read, and then the business of the fair commenced.

One important feature of the fair was the sale

of cheese, which, the cheese-making season being pretty well over, was brought by the farmers to sell, and cheese buyers, or factors, as they are called, came from all parts of the country to purchase. The farmer sold his cheese and had plenty of money in his pocket, and the wives and daughters, who, if not the actual makers of the cheese, at all events had had the oversight of it, came also to see it sold, and to receive from the farmer, —husband, or father—money to make purchases of winter clothing, and of provision against the Christmas time, which was frequently thought of so long before-hand.

From the great and the small farmhouse came the cheese, and from the country cottage came hives of honey, strings of onions, and immense quantities of nuts, walnuts, apples, and winter fruit, and with them, of course, all sorts of old-fashioned, simple-hearted, and homely men and women, in old-fashioned and picturesque dresses, who, like their smarter and richer neighbours the farmers, came here to turn their country summer produce into money, part of which went to buy winter clothing, if not provision. If the old folks came to sell and buy, the young folks also came to make their small purchases out of their wages or their savings, to meet with their companions, and to make themselves merry. One end of the large market-place was filled with shows and travelling theatres, to which there was a sort of out-

ward stage, where men in scarlet and gold played very loud music, and young men and women, in all sorts of fanciful dresses, with silver spangles and waving plumes, walked about or danced, to give the people an idea of all the amusement within. There were conjurors and fire-eaters, and dwarfs and giants, and exhibitions of wild beasts in great caravans, the fronts of which were adorned with huge paintings of all the wonders that were to be seen; but in which Mary soon observed that the dwarfs were represented as less than they really were, the giants as bigger, and the wild beasts ten times more terrific and wild than they ever appeared within their narrow cages.

All this will give you a little idea of the great fair, which was held as usual, just after Mary returned from Linford. Grandpapa at Wilton sent his cheese like any other farmer. It came in a wagon, which arrived generally at about five o'clock in the morning, and which was unloaded upon the pavement, in the market-place, by the men who brought it. As it was unloaded, the cheese was properly arranged by the fat dairy-maid who came with it, and who might be seen by nine o'clock sitting in the midst of her cheese, like a queen, dressed in her Sunday bonnet and large drab coat with four capes, which she and many another country woman invariably wore on such occasions.

By nine o'clock grandpapa from Wilton was

come, and grandmamma with him. They came in "the gig," and drove up to Mary's father's door, where they were joyfully received. Breakfast was always ready for them, and because they came out of the country and might be supposed to be very hungry—and people are used to such plenty in a farmhouse—the breakfast table, on these occasions, was unusually supplied. To Mary it seemed more like a dinner than a breakfast; and often, even to the abundant provisions which stood upon it, grandpapa and grandmamma, after opening that "big basket" which always came with them, would take out one of the large pork pies which they had brought, together with many other good things, and set it on the table, insisting that Mary's parents, as well as she herself, should have a slice of it, because grandmamma had made it, with her own dear hands, on purpose for their eating, and she knew that country things were such a treat to people that lived in towns.

When Mary had finished her breakfast, and she was not long over it, grandpapa, or somebody else, would give her leave to open the "big basket," out of which the pie had come, and this was a great pleasure to her. There was always a goose and some game, and such pots of preserves which that kindest of grandmothers had made for them, and always a little pot of blackberry jam for Mary's especial eating; a large pot of fresh butter, and a bottle of rich cream, and a bag of dried

pears or apricots, or something equally nice; and a large loaf of brown bread, and other pork pies; and a spare-rib and a dozen of other things; and, ten to one, while Mary was clearing away all these stores, in would come one of the farm-servants from Wilton, dressed in his Sunday clothes, carrying in a large hamper of apples which they had brought with them in the cheese wagon.

After breakfast grandpapa went into the fair to see how his cheese looked, and to hear how prices were, and sometimes he would take Mary with him. Her grandmamma never went into the fair on the first days; she disliked bustle and noise; and as she generally came to stay a week or two in the town, Mary was contented to leave her to go out with her grandfather. She always felt a great interest about her grandfather's cheese; she knew exactly where it stood, for she had seen it year after year, and Sally Moxon the old dairy-woman sitting amongst it, scolding if any of the buyers dared to run it down. On the side of the market-place where the cheese from Wilton stood, was exhibited the cheese of a hundred other farms at least, and there amongst it stood the farmers' wives and daughters, or the dairy-women, as in this case, all jealous of the honour of their cheese.

Long before noon Mary was again at home, for her grandfather had always too much bargaining to do with the cheese factors, to have time to attend to a little girl. When he came home to dinner, at

about one o'clock, any body could see, in a moment, by his countenance whether his cheese had sold well. If the prices were good and his dairy approved of, in all probability it was sold by dinner-time, and then he looked in such a good, merry humour, and so did Sally Moxon the dairy-woman, for he always, on the morning of the fair, made her a present according to the sale of the cheese.

When the cheese was sold, and Sally had received her present, she might be seen without her great drab-coat, under which was her best gown, wearing a smart shawl, and often with a boa round her neck, walking in the fair with some of the men-servants of the farm, who, as I said, were always dressed in their best, leaning on the arm of one of them, and laughing and talking with them and her other acqauintance. On they went, pushing their way through a crowd of other farm-servants and dairy-women; making purchases at the booths or the shops, receiving and giving fairings, and thronging into the shows.

After tea, and often rather late in the evening, Sally, with all her purchases and her good humour, went merrily home with her fellow servants in the wagon, saying, we hope, that it had been the pleasantest fair-day she ever spent.

Grandpapa had often, also, to sell or buy a horse or something of that kind, which found him plenty to do after the cheese was sold, so that he always stayed over night. If grandpapa had satisfac-

tion in his sales, he was, as I said, in very good humour; and I strongly suspect that the amount of money which the beloved grandmother had to make purchases with, a good deal depended upon this circumstance, for sometimes it was observable that she dropped the idea of buying a second new gown, although she had spoken of it at first; or she would remark, as if the idea had suddenly struck her, that she "thought her old muff would do very well this winter for an old woman like her—though she had thought, when she came first, of buying a new one—if Mary's mother was not ashamed of walking out with her in the town, it would do very well in the country."

Dearly beloved grandmamma at Wilton, I have not words to tell your self-denying goodness; never did you blame another, or speak harshly, or make a disappointment more bitter by regrets or ill-humour! Would to Heaven that every body was like you!

All that could be done to make the dear old lady's visit pleasant was done. What did they care whether her muff was a new one or an old one; they loved her too well to care about such trifles; and they had good reason. Frequently Uncle Edward came to see her at Mary's father, and then the ten days or fortnight that she spent with them were still more agreeable.

At the particular fair of which we are writing, grandpapa's cheese sold wonderfully well; so did

his young horses; all things went as he wished them. Sally Moxon laughed and chattered in the fair, you could hear her a hundred yards off; she bought a new shawl of scarlet and green; a new gown of yellow and blue, and such a smart cap for Sundays, as had never been seen on her old-fashioned head before. She gave a fairing to the wagoner and to the wagoner's boy; and they, who likewise had received their present from "the master," were equally liberal in return.

All that the dear grandmother had wished to buy she bought, and had plenty of money left in her purse beside. It was a merry fair also to Mary; she had the very presents she wanted; Rogers, new edition of Italy, just then come out, and a box of coloured chalks for drawing, just then newly invented, which Mr. Sunderland sent to her from a distance; besides lesser fairings from every body else.

Grandmamma, who was amongst the most anxious on account of Mary's health, and who thought her still looking extremely delicate, spite of her summer sojourn at Linford, obtained the consent of her parents for her to return with her to Wilton, where she was to spend several weeks, staying over the Christmas holidays, which she particularly wished for, because her other two grand-children would come from school, and thus Mary would have additional pleasure.

These were the children of a brother of Mary's

father who had died abroad, their mother also was dead, and they were entirely under the care of their grand-parents. They were both of them at school, and spent their holidays at Wilton.

CHAPTER X.

MARY'S CHRISTMAS VISIT AT WILTON.

THERE was no coach, nor railroad between Wilton and the large town in which Mary lived; there was nothing better than the car and the carrier's cart for people to travel by, who had not their own carriage, or could hire one at the town. Mary and her grandmother were not too grand to ride in the car, the driver of which was well known to the dear old lady, and who was sure to take as much care of her and her little grandchild as if they had been gold from the Bank of England. Mary had ridden in this car before, and right glad was she to do so, because it took her to Wilton.

You must, therefore, fancy Mary sitting with her grandmother on the best seat in the car, the leather curtains of which are all carefully buckled down to keep out every draught, and four other inhabitants of Wilton, or one of the adjacent villages, are with them, for the car holds six, with sundry parcels and baskets, and little boxes, which people hold

on their knees, or stow away behind their feet, and thus they go jogging along very bad roads, towards the familiar village of Wilton. Mary knew every inch of the road, yet for all that she peeped out of the openings of the curtains to notice the various points of their journey. There was the old mill, of which her papa and her Uncle Edward had so often told her the comical story of the old fat miller, who loved a joke, and one market-day ran a race in Derby, with a little nimble-footed tailor, and won it too, because, having a start given him on account of his size, he took his way along a narrow passage which was just at the end of their race, and so completely filled it up, by his enormous bulk, that the little man could not get past him. And there was the old Hall, where that famous dog lived as is described, in the Boy's Country Book, which set off with a lesser companion on a long journey to revenge some ill usage which he (the weaker dog) had received from a huge mastiff at an inn. The huge mastiff was left dead on the spot, and the two friends came home again, wearied out with their long travel.

About midway on their journey they came to a coal district, where Mary always took notice of the blackened road, and of the colliers who then, it being evening, were returning to their homes, with their grimy faces, their short flannel over-shirts, and the huge coal which many of them were carrying on their heads; it being, in that part of the country,

customary to allow the men as much coal for their own use as they could carry home themselves. Right and left of the road, also, she never failed to notice the huge piles of slack or small coal which were piled up near the pit's mouth, and which in many cases were always burning. As long as Mary could remember this road, these hills of slack had been burning, and still would burn for years to come, as she was told.

As they approached Wilton they left the coal district, and came into that pleasant pastoral region which surrounded the village. In former times, however, there had been coal-pits even there. Some walls, and even houses, in the village had been thrown down in consequence of the excavations under their foundations; and in some of her grandpapa's fields were the remains of old pits, which never failed to fill her with a shuddering sort of interest, more especially as some rather dismal stories were told about them. Mary's grandfather, in his younger days, had been greatly concerned with these coal-pits; and hence it was that one little room in the house still went by the name of the counting-house; and, from old habit, even the farming men were paid every Saturday night in this room.

We have taken a long time for this short journey, which we hope has not been found a tedious one. But now it is over. Mary and her grandmother are arrived; and Mary is once more struck by that

which always strikes her at Wilton, the plenty there seems to be in that house, both to eat and to drink, and the large fires in almost every room. Coal was so plentiful there that her grandpapa had it merely for fetching, so there was a great fire in "the little kitchen," where the farm-servants sat, and in the "big kitchen," where the women-servants, when they had time to sew for themselves, might sit, if they pleased. This was a room with a stone floor, and large dresser, and cupboards —such cupboards!—where Mary's grandmother distilled her rose and lavender waters, and mixed medicines for the poor; where she made her preserves, and her cakes; and where the pork-pies, and the mince-pies, and the custards and all the delicacies were compounded. Then there was a huge fire in the parlour, where grandpapa and grandmamma sat; and if any body was likely to come, there was another great fire made in the new dining room; and these, to say nothing of fires in bed-rooms, never failed to astonish Mary, and give her that sense of comfort which is so delightful.

Grandmamma had sent by the carrier's cart, the very day she herself came in the car, a vast quantity of groceries and fruit for the Christmas pies and merry-makings; and Mary had not been very long at Wilton, before she sat down with gradmamma to stone raisins, and peel apples, and grate nutmegs, and pick currants for the mince-pies. It was pleasant enough with such companionship; although

I must confess to you that Mary was not particularly fond of any thing that belonged to cookery. The mince-pies were made; and a fresh supply of pork-pies, and sausages, and huge seed cakes, plum cakes and biscuits, for Harry and Kate, the other two grand-children, were about to arrive; and grandmamma knew what a treat some of these good things would be to them.

Mary's cousins were come. Kate a strong, active-looking girl, with hair of a chestnut brown, and which, with a strong inclination to curl, was kept tolerably short at school, so that her face was encircled with little ringlets that gave a peculiarly sharp expression to the whole countenance, which was, nevertheless, a very agreeable one. She had small, quick, brown eyes, and altogether such a lively, brisk look, as reminded you of a little active bee. Harry, who was a year older than his sister, was a good deal like her in character, active, intelligent, and lively as possible. It happened that, just before he had left school for these holidays, he had heard some Swiss singers; and, as he had a natural talent for singing himself, he had caught the airs at once; and now all day long was singing and joddling away, greatly to his own delight, if not to that of others.

Mary, who, as we know, was much more accustomed to the society of grown people than those of her own age, found in the companionship of her cousins a novelty that was quite delightful.

Harry, with the help of one of the men, and by means of a wagon-rope, fixed up a swing in the corn-chamber, where they amused themselves very often by swinging; he made a slide on the pond in the field where he and his sister, who was as great an adept in sliding as himself, undertook to teach Mary this "delightful art," as he termed it. But poor Mary was not born to be a slider; and she felt a little mortified at the sort of quiet contempt with which they regarded her unsuccessful attempts after they had given up trying to teach her.

Harry wished for snow, and so did Kate; they wanted to build up a snow-man, and to have a game at snow-balling; and they had their wish. It began to fall on St. Thomas's day, which is the shortest day in the year; and the sight of this falling snow, and the prospect of the pleasure which it would afford them, kept Harry and Kate in a state of delightful excitement all day. Mary had an excitement, or rather a quiet, heart-felt pleasure of another kind.

Her grandpapa, who was the proprietor of a good deal of land about the village, was obliged, according to old usage, to give certain sums of money to the poor of the parish; these were called doles; one of these doles, or gifts, was given on St. Thomas's day; all of them, indeed, were given during the winter season, because then, it is supposed, that the poor suffer the most. It was a dole of ten pounds, and was given to the poor,

deserving widows of the parish. Mary had once before been there on a similar occasion, and her grandpapa allowed her to be the dispenser of his bounty; now she asked for the same favour, and it was cheerfully granted.

At eleven o'clock, therefore, in the morning, you must fancy "grandpapa and grandmamma at Wilton," sitting in two large chairs, side by side, for he always would have his wife with him on these occasions, because she knew the poor so much better than he did. There they sit side by side in two old-fashioned chairs by the great kitchen fire, and, as they sit there, they look like an old Saxon king and queen. The grandfather has a canvas bag of silver coin on his knee, and a paper in his hand, to which he refers from time to time, to see who are his old pensioners, and what was their state in the former year; and after a moment's consideration, in which his wife is often referred to, Mary is told the sum of money to be given, and this she takes out of the bag. Mary looked like a little angel standing at the side of the old Saxon king; and often some poor old widow, who was surprised by the amount which dropped from the little angel's hand into her old withered palm, would fall upon her knees, and bless God at the same time that she thanked *them*, because he had inclined their hearts to pity her distress.

Often also another blessing would fall upon these poor pensioners, in consequence of the knowledge

which was thus obtained, and that altogether silently and privately, and known only to the dear grandmother and Mary, to whom she often confided such things. A bushel of potatoes, or a little joint of meat, or a pork pie, would be removed from this house of plenty, and conjured, as it seemed, upon the widow's empty shelves, and thus enable her old heart to rejoice doubly at that season, when the world has cause to be glad in the birth of a universal Saviour.

All the time, as I tell you, this old Saxon king and queen were sitting in their great chairs with the little angel beside them; and while the bag of silver money was emptying, and one by one, another thankful heart left their door, the snow was falling, falling, falling; and Harry and Kate were out in the garden, snowy as it was, essaying their first game at snow-balling. Their laughter and merriment came out of the snowy garden into the great kitchen, and by dinner-time, having thoroughly enjoyed themselves, and having commenced rolling huge balls of snow for the foundation of a snow-man, and then, having changed their shoes and stockings, which were soaked with snow-water, they sat down to the dinner table with faces so rosy that I know not what to compare them to; with appetites that seemed almost unappeasable, and spirits so exhilarated, that they almost deafened their grand-parents with their merriment.

Mary promised that the next morning she would go out with them; and her grandmamma wished it, as she looked pale and more delicate than she really was, from the contrast with those cousins whose health and spirits were so exuberant.

It snowed all that night, and the next morning when they woke, behold! there had not been such a fall of snow for twenty years. It lay every where a yard thick; and in many places, where it had been driven by the wind, several yards. The village street was one mass of snow, which the villagers were looking at, from door and window, in utter amazement, before they began to cut a way through it. Harry was overjoyed at the sight; he sprang from bed, dressed hastily, and rushed down stairs to dig away on his own account, or to help any one else. The farm-servants had now plenty to do, for the horses were snowed up in the stables; the cows in the cow-house; the pigs in the stye, and the poultry in the hen-house; to say nothing of the dog, whose kennel was under the steps of the horse-block, so that he and his house were buried together. A road had to be cut to all these imprisoned creatures; and the small flock of sheep, in the little meadow below the orchard, had to be looked after, perhaps dug out. The well was snowed up, and so was the dairy door, and the steps which led down to the coal cellar.

Harry thought it was the most amusing thing in the world, and he was instantly at work with

the men, shovelling away and singing with all his might; it was wonderful that he had breath for both. Kate was not long after him; and then she might be seen with her frock pinned up, great over-boots on, and a woollen shawl tied over her head, working away likewise, but to some little disadvantage, because every thing in the shape of a spade was already in the hands of man or boy, and she had nothing better than the kitchen fire-shovel to work with. But that did not much matter, she really helped; and she and Sally Moxon, who was lucky enough to get hold of a broad wooden malt-shovel, cleared a road both to the well and to the dairy.

This was on the Wednesday; Christmas day was on the Sunday this year. Mary's father and mother were to come on Saturday for Christmas eve, and to spend several days of the following Christmas week at Wilton; now she feared that the great snow would prevent this, more especially as they heard that the road was impassable all the way. Plenty of people beside Mary had similar fears, and the different parishes therefore sent out poor men by hundreds, to open the roads, for which they received good wages, and work thus coming unexpectedly, at a season when so many were unemployed, it was thought quite a blessing to the poor.

The sheep were dug out all safe and sound; the cows, the horses, the pigs, the poultry, and

even the dog were set at liberty, and in the middle of the farm-yard lay a piled-up heap of snow, like a little mountain, which had been cleared from all sides, and out of this Harry contemplated having a world of fun; his first idea was to carve it into a snow-man, which he thought would not a little astonish the horses, but that magnificent idea he was obliged to abandon, because the snow was not solid enough. It then became a sort of stronghold for him, behind which he could hide, with a whole battery of snow-balls, which he let fly at the passers-by, and found infinite fun in the astonishment and often anger of the person who felt himself hit from a quarter where no foe was visible. Mary and her cousin did not at all agree about this amusement; she could see none in it; nay, so far from finding it amusing, it distressed her exceedingly to see an inoffensive old man or woman, perhaps one of those very widows whose blessing she had so lately received, made a mark for him to throw at. It was in vain that she told him that his balls were really as hard as stones, and could not fail of inflicting a heavy blow; he thought her sentimental, and laughed at her, promising, however, to have mercy on old men and women, and only to aim at "dogs and such things." Neither did this satisfy Mary; she would not hurt or distress even a dog if she could help it. Kate, like her brother, thought her "squeamish and lackadaisical;" they said that every body threw snow-balls, and always aimed at old

women, or dogs, or such things. Mary felt a sense of injustice in this reasoning. She remembered Mr. Sunderland, who said that, like her, he never trod on a worm if he could help it, nor even on a little ant, and who often carried upon his own shoulders some heavy burden under which a woman or a child was staggering; he would have seen no fun in this snow-balling; and, unable to convince her cousins, she could not help crying, partly in pity, and partly at what she thought their hard-heartedness; and that made them laugh at her, which wounded her no little. She called them cruel and unfeeling, for she was very angry, and, going into the house, she left them to their sport.

Let not my readers imagine that Harry and Kate were cruel; they were nothing of the kind. They were only thoughtless; they were so full of life and spirits that they must be exerting themselves; and unfortunately among the people with whom they had been been brought up, and even at school, practical jokes were thought to be good amusement, and a "bit of good fun," as they called it, though it might wound the feelings or cause bodily pain to others.

A little coldness on this ensued between Mary and her cousins, but it did not last four-and-twenty hours.

Christmas eve was come. Holly and mistletoe decorated the house; a huge kissing-bunch, in the making of which all the three children became

thoroughly good friends again, was suspended from the ceiling of the great kitchen, where, on that evening, there were to be all sorts of games, and to partake of which at least a dozen children were invited. Spite of the snow Mary's parents arrived, and so did Uncle Edward.

I need not tell you all the games that were played; hunt the slipper, blind-man's buff, turn the trencher, and suchlike, in which the grown-up people, as well as the children, took part. I need not tell you of the great yule log, nor the huge brown-posset pot, which held several quarts of ale-posset, of which, according to custom, every body, old and young, must partake; nor of the old fiddler who came in and played while they danced; nor of the songs that were sung, in which Harry cut a capital figure, nor of the stories that were told; nor of the jokes and merriment that there were. You have all of you, no doubt, spent a Christmas eve in a farm-house, and in that case you know all the fun, and can imagine what a beautiful supper there was in the new "dining-room," where another great log was burning; and can taste, in imagination, the hot turkey, the mince-pies, the custards, the cakes, the apples, the nuts, and all the other good things.

That which, perhaps, more than any thing else made Mary happy this evening was hearing that her father had sent poor old Mr. Felton a nice little joint of meat, a bushel of potatoes, and a ready

mixed plum-pudding for his Christmas dinner; and that their good old friend had invited a worthy and poor man of his acquaintance to dine with him, whose wife would cook the dinner excellently for them all.

They sat up playing games, and guessing riddles, and telling many stories till midnight, when the carol singers came round with a band of music, and then they all were silent to listen. It was a beautiful winter's night: the stars shone out by thousands in the sky; and the earth below was clothed with its unbroken covering of pure snow, which having frozen, was now as hard as a marble pavement. They sang the old-fashioned carol of—

> "Christians, awake, salute the happy morn,
> On which the Saviour of mankind was born."

And Mary, who had a deal of poetical feeling, thought it was the most beautiful music she had ever heard. I forgot to tell you before that it had been a great pleasure to Mary to hear for the last fortnight "the waits," as they are called, come round singing their carols and hymns in the dead of the night. She seldom quite woke up; but their voices and the music sounded as if they were part of a pleasant dream, and then in the morning she remembered it as if it were only just before she woke, and as if it had died away into a remote distance, like songs of angels up in heaven.

That was a delightful Christmas eve. It was Christmas day; a splendid winter's morning; the

sun shone, and the frozen snow seemed full of little diamonds. As soon as breakfast was over they set out to the little old-fashioned chapel, at about three miles' distance. Mary was to ride the pony which she had at Linford, and which was now always called hers; the grandpapa also rode on his tall, stout horse, and when he was mounted he looked, as he sat on the horse, in his large ample coat and old-fashioned hat, like that same old Saxon king of whom I spoke before, mounted and ready to ride to some Wittenagemot, or meeting of the aldermen. Away trotted grandpapa, and Mary cantered by his side; and grandmamma, and Harry, and Kate came trotting after in the gig, Harry being privileged to drive. Besides those who rode and drove, there were three who walked, Mary's father and mother, and Uncle Edward, who set off half an hour before the others.

Mary, as she went along, was reminded continually of the northern regions; their way lay along narrow roads through which a path had been cut in the snow, and which now was well tracked. The snow lay half way up the hedges, and loaded the branches of the trees as with a new foliage, and bowed them down like an arch above the road, casting over all a sort of twilight gloom. The fields lay like one immense plain, for where the hedges were low they were completely buried. All was as still and hushed as in a dream; the only sound that came clearly to the ear was the ringing of the

church bells, which now, more than ever, seemed to descend from heaven. The little chapel, to which they were going, stood on the ridge of a lofty stretch of country, and was seen at a great distance; a number of fir trees which surrounded it stood up aloft, at all times, like a land-mark, but were now, more than ever, made visible by the contrast of colour. At every turn of the road, wherever there had been an eddy of wind, the snow had been driven into huge heaps, and scooped out, as it were, into caves, the roofs of which seemed to hang over in the most graceful curves and scrolls.

It was a delightful ride, and when Mary, at the chapel door, was joined by her parents and her Uncle Edward, she found them as much delighted with the winter scene around them as she herself had been.

But I must not linger on these winter scenes. And yet, my dear readers, you ought to know that one morning, when the snow had thawed a little, so that it would cake, Uncle Edward and Mary's papa helped Harry to make a snow-man in the orchard; and that when this was done they joined him in a good game at snow-balling, in which Mary also took part, to the great joy of her cousins; and that, when they all returned to dinner, Mary was nearly as rosy, and altogether as hungry, as any of them.

CHAPTER XXI.

WHITSUNTIDE VISIT.

MARY paid another visit to her grandmamma at Whitsuntide, and then the neighbourhood of Wilton, and the garden at grandpapa's looked very different to what they did at Christmas. In the orchard the apple-trees were all in bloom, and so was that remarkable hawthorn-tree, which was called "Grandpapa's Pride," and which looked like a sunny and fragrant imitation of the great snow of the former winter. The garden was full of lilacs, laburnums, and guelder-roses, which were all bowed down with their flowers. Every thing flourished in the garden at Wilton. Unlike the little square, smoke-dried garden at the back of the draper's house, in which fresh flowers were planted each year, and which, in the succeeding months, dwindled away, the flower-roots here spread to such an extent, and the flowering shrubs grew to such a size, that it was all the gardener could do to keep them within bounds. Down the sides of the borders grew great tufts of polyanthuses and fumatory, dog-toothed violet, double narcissus, or white Nancies, as they are called there, and suchlike flowers; and just behind them, rising like an audience in a theatre, taller flowers, all in the fullest bloom; great, big peonies, red, and blush, and white, single and

double; and large blue irises and gilly-flowers of every tint of yellow, orange and brown; and, behind these, delicate Persian lilacs, and flowering accacias.

On the Saturday evening before Whit-Sunday, if you had been there, you would have seen grandmamma and Mary in that flowery garden; Mary with a large basket in her hand, and grandmamma with a large pair of scissors and a knife, which she used as occasion might require; now cutting off flower-laden branches of lilac and laburnum, or the sweet narcissus, and whole handfuls of polyanthus and gilly-flowers. And, then, when the basket was full, away ran Mary, and emptied it on the grass-plot by the door, where you would already see quite a heap of these gorgeous and abundant flowers. In a while, they have gone the round of the garden, not failing to gather, among other things, plenty of strong-scented lad's-love and bergamot; and, then, though you would hardly see that any flowers had been gathered, there would be a great clothes' basket full, which before long, if he were not already waiting, an old man in the village would come and carry away.

On Monday morning, which was as bright and sunny as heart could wish, Mary heard the church bells ringing before she was out of bed; and when she and her grand-parents were sitting at breakfast, they heard up in the village a sound of music, in which they could distinguish "the

big drum." Country people were seen streaming into the village, all in their best clothes, and the men with posies in their button-holes; and at the corner of the street, before breakfast was over, Mary saw a large blue silk flag, and an equally large white one, brilliantly emblazoned with the devices of the men's and the women's clubs.

Grandpapa was a patron of the one, and grandmamma of the other; and though they did not walk with them in procession, yet they took much interest in their welfare; and in honour of them the clubs always walked down to their house, and then back again, on their way to church. The music played, the church bells rang, and onward came the procession; and now you would see for what purpose Mary and her grandmamma had gathered the flowers on Saturday evening. Those flower-laden branches of lilac and laburnum, and those great red peonies and bunches of gilly-flowers were fastened upon the flag-staffs; and on the tips of the white wands, which the women carried in their hands, were little posies, mostly made up of grandmamma's polyanthuses, white Nancies, and dog-toothed violets.

Grandmamma always made it a rule to stand at the open window as they came down the village street, and to acknowledge their mark of respect by a smile and a nod. By her side stood Mary, smiling likewise; and they two, as they stood there with their affectionate spirits and their hearts full of good will,

won many a silent blessing from the hearts of these poor people.

On the Whit-Monday of which I am telling you, Mary and her grandmother, after dinner, set off to a neighbouring village, where they were invited by the clergyman, a friend of grandmamma's. He was entertaining the members of a Friendly Society, which he himself had established, and which consisted both of men and women, in his own beautiful garden, where a tent was pitched for the purpose. He thought this much better than that they should go to a public-house. The garden was an old-fashioned one with many curiously cut evergreens and evergreen arches, which were adorned with garlands of flowers. They all dined in the tent, and after dinner their friends and children were allowed to come in and walk about with them.

The clergyman, also, invited his friends. There was a band of music in the garden, and at six o'clock tea was ready in the tent, when any body, on the payment of a few pence, might join the party. In this way the children and immediate friends of the members partook of tea with them. Mary and her grandmother took tea with the clergyman and his wife, and their other friends, and returned home, wishing that the club at Wilton could be managed in this way. They wished it still more as they passed the great club-room at the Red Lion, where the men's club was assembled, and heard the sounds of drunken merriment

through the open windows, and saw the women, whose club could not afford either eating or drinking, sauntering about the street, many of them lamenting that a part of the next week's wages would be condemned by this revelry at the public-house.

CHAPTER XII.

MARY AT ELLINGHAM.

The summer commenced—a beautiful summer—and all our friends were in good spirits. It was twelve months now since Mary was at Linford, and her health might be considered as reestablished. You must not imagine, therefore, that Mary does nothing but go visiting about; on the contrary, her lessons had been recommenced, and the little visit, which I have just been describing, was only a week's holiday.

Mary went on with her French, and music, and geography, and arithmetic, and grammar; she even pursued her drawing again, and was allowed to read in large books, but now all was in moderation; with study came relaxation, and as much rational, unexpensive pleasure as her parents could obtain for her. It was the wish of her father and mother, as no doubt you have seen, to let her have as much exercise and fresh air as possible; to make her home cheerful, and to let her breathe, as one may say,

an atmosphere of love and truth. There was no severity used towards her, for it was not needed; and so entirely was she without fear as regarded her parents, that concealment or falsehood was what she never thought of. Mary's home was a happy one, and yet her parents were not rich; and as she saw around her daily nothing but kindness and love, she in her small way, and according to her powers as a child, endeavoured to act towards others in that spirit. You, dear children, are all of you guided so much by example. If you are surrounded by ill humour and selfishness, or by hard and quarrelsome tempers, you are almost sure to grow like them. If my history of Mary Leeson pleases you, read it again and again; let the influence of her sweet spirit rest upon you, and make you like her.

As I began to tell you, it was a beautiful summer, and early in the month of June sweet Aunt Emmeline came on a short visit to Mary's parents. Aunt Emmeline, however, did not stay long; she only called for a few days, on her way home from London, and to beg that Mary might return with her, according to the promise of last summer.

Of course Mary must go, grandmamma at Ellingham had not seen her for above a year, and her lessons could just as well be attended to by her aunt as by any one else. The couple of new frocks were made; the new bonnet and the new shoes were bought; and then the little wardrobe was packed

up, and Mary and sweet Aunt Emmeline set off in the stage-coach, and arrived safely at Ellingham for tea.

To Mary it looked as if it were only yesterday since she was at Ellingham last; there sat grandmamma, just as she did a year and a half ago, in that same old chair, in the very same spot, in the same large, light-coloured silk shawl, and knitting just as then. The old curious china jars still stood on the tall mantel-piece; the old oak wainscot looked just as dark and polished as ever. Aunt Emmeline's flower-stand still stood in the window, and in the garden the little heart and diamond-shaped borders were as full of flowers as ever.

Grandmamma, however, found great change in Mary; she was grown taller; she carried herself better; she looked more healthy. Grandmamma was glad to see this, for it convinced her that her mamma had put a stop to all that reading and studying which were so injurious to a child. And then she told Mary that her neighbour, Mrs. Radburn, had her little granddaughter now with her from Quebec, and that she hoped they would play a deal, and be good companions, for that Malvina Radburn was a very pretty behaved girl, and very fond of skipping and bowling a hoop, and playing at ball, as grandmamma had always required from Mary's mamma and her other aunts; and that such a system was rational might be seen in Mal-

vina Radburn, who was very forward in her learning. Grandmamma had heard that she read and wrote French very correctly, which was most likely the case, because French was so much in use at Quebec, though grandmamma, who was no French scholar herself, could not speak to the fact; but as to her English writing and reading, and her needlework, that she could speak to, for she had heard her read, and seen her letters, and the pocket-handkerchiefs which she had hemmed, and the night-dresses which she had made for her grandmamma, with back stitched wristbands, and gathered sleeves, and five button-holes; and these were really quite remarkable.

Mary felt a little discouraged; she could neither back-stitch nor make button-holes; and, when her grandmamma went on to question her on these important subjects, Mary was obliged to confess her ignorance, at which grandmamma shook her head, and said it was high time that Mary learned how to do them.

Mary was rather frightened at the idea of becoming acquainted with Malvina Radburn, who was so superior to herself in practical knowledge; but grandmamma, who was of opinion that the being an only child, and brought up so much among grown people, had been a great disadvantage to Mary, was determined to lose no time in introducing her grandchild to a desirable companion of her own age.

Mrs. Radburn's garden adjoined that of Mary's grandmamma; and, as the two neighbours were on the best possible terms, they had opened a little gate in the fence, so that communication between the two houses was very easy. In the course of the next morning Mary was introduced to her new friend, of whom I will now say a word or two.

Malvina was two years older than Mary, and a girl of a lively disposition, kind heart, good abilities, and of such remarkable aptitude with her fingers, that she excelled in every thing which was done by the hand. She was a dark-eyed, dark-haired girl, who, having learned French in the nursery, spoke it as a second native tongue; the multiplication table she also knew thoroughly, backwards and forwards, upwards and downwards; and having, by chance, been examined by Mary's grandmamma on this subject, had risen very highly in the old lady's estimation.

But now let us hear what Mrs. Radburn herself says to Malvina at the breakfast-table on the very morning of which we are writing. "Malvina, my dear, you never practised yesterday, and when Mrs. Bernard comes you won't know a note; and I don't believe you have touched the Italian grammar, though I heard Mrs. Bernard beg of you to look over that verb; and as to your ignorance of geography, I am really ashamed of you."

Malvina made no reply, but felt in her mind the utmost repugnance against the music, the

Italian, and the geography; and her grandmother went on: "Mrs. Weston (that was Mary's grandmother) has her little granddaughter with her now; she is not as old as you are, and yet she has always been so ready to do her lessons, that I have heard say they had to hide her books that she might not get them; and lock up the piano to prevent her practising; I have no doubt but that she reads Italian now like English; and, as to geography and such things, nobody ever knew how she learned them.

"But, grandmamma," interrupted Malvina, "I've heard say that her health was ruined by all that study."

"Well, well, child!" returned Mrs. Radburn, "I don't want you to be a martyr to your books, only I will have such lessons, as Mrs. Bernard sets you, learned; and I don't want you to look like a little fool in comparison with Mrs. Weston's grandchild."

Malvina thought that if this granddaughter of Mrs. Weston's was such a prodigy of learning she did not care to know her; and, therefore, though she wasted a whole hour in feeding the dog and parrot, no sooner did she see Mrs. Weston coming through the little gate, leading Mary by the hand, than she ran up into her own room with the Italian grammar, less to learn the verb than to avoid making acquaintance with a child that she was not inclined to like.

The two children, however, were introduced to

each other, and left to become acquainted; the two old ladies knowing very well that there is a free-masonry among children which can easily find the way into each other's hearts. And they were right; for in spite of all the superior knowledge which Mary was supposed to have of Italian grammar and history, and Malvina's superior proficiency in button-hole stitch and the multiplication table, it was not many days before they were the best friends that could possibly be, and had laughed, as grown people often do under similar circumstances, at the prejudice which had been excited, where it was intended only to excite admiration and esteem. Mary did not know a word of Italian, therefore she could neither help nor shame her friend; nor did Malvina wish to give any lessons in back-stitching and button-hole making. They found it, however, very pleasant to play little duets together, and to read Telemachus out of the same book, sitting side by side in the little arbour under the apple tree. Telemachus was a great favourite with them; they even assumed the characters, Mary was Telemachus, and Malvina, Mentor, because she was the elder.

This companionship with a child of her own age, and one who was well informed, and in all respects her equal, afforded Mary a great and a new delight. They studied their lessons together, sweet Aunt Emmeline undertaking to see that all was properly done, and converting, for the time, the

little parlour into a school-room. She played little dances to them while they danced what they called "canary waltzes and quadrilles;" some little inventions of their own, which they fancied made it much easier to study all the steps and figures which Mr. Quick, the dancing-master, required them to practise.

That Mary was rather unskilful with her needle nobody could deny; and as Aunt Emmeline knew how much Mary's mother wished her to learn to do that well while she was young, which might be useful to her when she was a woman, she determined to give her sewing lessons in this same little parlour; and then, when some difficult piece of needlework was accomplished, to astonish grandmamma with it. All went on charmingly. In an evening, when the heat of the day was over, Aunt Emmeline and the two little girls might be seen at work among the heart and star-shaped flower borders, or gathering, into their little baskets, the over-blown roses, before they fell, for that *pot-pourri*, of which I spoke before.

Sometimes, when the flowers were all gathered, or there was not a single weed to pull up from the borders, they would walk up and down the garden together, or even sit, all three of them, on the little bench under the bower, reading some pleasant book, or laughing and singing like birds. Aunt Emmeline, who was so sweet and good-tempered, had, of course, many friends, and some of these

often would call on her in an evening, and walk in the garden with her, while the little girls amused themselves; and then, when it grew dusk, they would all go into the old wainscoted parlour, where grandmamma was sitting, most likely with some pleasant old friend of hers; and there they would find a nice little supper set out, of little tarts, and dainty little cakes, and gooseberry-fool, perhaps, and such delicious currant wine, of grandmamma's own making!

Sometimes, when Aunt Emmeline was walking about the garden with her friends, Mary and Malvina would top and tail the gooseberries which grandmamma's maid had been gathering in the garden for the next day's dinner; or they would even shell the peas for her, for it was a great pleasure to them to be employed.

Mary always enjoyed an evening party at home, when she was permitted to sit up an hour or two later than common. There was such a bright and festive look about the house at such times; and the tea someway had a difference and a pleasanter flavour, as it seemed to her, out of the silver tea-pot and the best china. But, charming as parties at home had been, they were nothing to the little parties which grandmamma at Ellingham had now and then. The old wainscoted room looked into the garden, and the flowers which Aunt Emmeline brought into it made it look so bright and pleasant; and when candles were lighted, the panels of the

old oak wainscot looked like looking-glasses; and Aunt Emmeline, in her thin white muslin and a rose in her hair, looked so sweet and fresh that it was quite a pleasure to see her. Whether they had company or not, Mary always wore a white frock in an afternoon, and whenever it was the least soiled she had a clean one on, for grandmamma loved to see every thing neat and nice, and never grumbled about the trouble and expense of washing.

Mary's sewing went on capitally; she was begining to make a night-dress for grandmamma, as Malvina had done; and she had already made half-a-dozen button-holes on a piece of linen for practice. The "canary waltzes and quadrilles" were of so much use that they received nothing but commendation from the dancing master; the music lesson was carefully practised; the Italian grammar studied; Mary learned the multiplication table thoroughly; and she and Malvina read French together industriously.

Mrs. Radburn said, writing of Malvina to her mother, "she is a very good girl, I must confess, and is taking pains to break herself of her idle habits. I attribute this, in a great measure, to the companionship of a very clever little girl, the grandchild of my neighbour, Mrs. Weston, who is Malvina's daily companion."

The beloved grandmamma at Ellingham, in writing to her sister Willoughby, said, "I have my dear

little grandchild with me now from ——, she is a very pretty behaved and sensible child; but owing to the over-cultivation of her mind, which was a great mistake of her mother's, and her delicate health in consequence, she is somewhat deficient in what I consider essentials in a girl's education, and which cannot be begun too early. However, she is getting on nicely now; Emmeline takes great pains with her, and she is greatly aided by the grandchild of my neighbour, Mrs. Radburn, who is a nice companion for Mary, and who, being a very clever child at her needle, and well drilled in the solid elements of learning, is a most desirable associate for her, because children, as we all know, are so prone to imitate."

Such were the reports of the children which were sent abroad.

I was telling you of Aunt Emmeline and the two little girls walking in the garden when they had nothing else to do. One evening they were walking in this way, the two little girls with each an arm round her waist, when they heard a quick step on the gravel behind them; they all turned round, and who should it be but Uncle Edward! At once Mary rushed away from her aunt, and sprang into his arms; it was such an unexpected pleasure! Her uncle kissed her tenderly, as he always did; and by that time Aunt Emmeline was come up, and, blushing like a rose, she seemed almost as glad to see him as Mary had been.

Mary was astonished and delighted; she wanted him at once to let her show him all about her grandmamma's garden, the little bower under the apple-tree, and the standard rose which bore four different-coloured flowers at the same time; but, to her surprise, he told her he had seen the bower, and had even sat in it, and had seen, as long ago as last summer, the standard rose with its four different-coloured flowers. How very odd! Mary had no idea that Uncle Edward had ever been there before. What! did he often come to grandmamma's at Ellingham? Not so often as he should like, he said. He smiled, and looked at Aunt Emmeline; and then she smiled; and then he took her arm and linked it in his, and they two walked down the garden together.

Well, it was very odd, Mary thought, but still it was very pleasant. She was glad that her Uncle Edward knew Ellingham; and she was glad that he was come while she was there, for then they should have some of those pleasant long walks, which her aunt had been talking of, to Fairfield Abbey, and the old ruins of Compton Castle, and to Burwood Chase. Mary remembered now that her aunt had said perhaps somebody would be coming who could go with them, because they could not go alone. No doubt but that Uncle Edward was the *somebody* she meant.

As Mary had wished, an excursion was planned to Fairfield Abbey, and was looked forward to

with the utmost delight: it was put an end to, however, by a very unexpected event.

A letter came from Mary's mother to say that Aunt Willoughby had written to fix the time of Mary's long-talked-of visit. Aunt Emmeline, or somebody, so Aunt Willoughby said, was to take her to Manchester, where she then was, and would take her home with her. Mary's mother was sorry about this arrangement, because she feared it might be inconvenient to Aunt Emmeline; but, as the visit had been so long promised, she thought it must now be paid, especially as Mary was at this time in good health, and was half way on the journey. The same day came a letter from Aunt Willoughby, repeating all that Mary's mother had said, and fixing the meeting to the very hour.

Mary was disappointed more than she had words to tell. Aunt Willoughby and all the people at her house were strangers to her; she wished very much not to go; but her grandmamma, Aunt Emmeline, and even Uncle Edward, cheered her up. They told her that it would be sure to be pleasant, that it was only to be a visit of two months, perhaps less, and that she would be very happy. They told her what a clever woman Aunt Willoughby was, and that every body said she was so wonderful with children; people advised with her about education all over the country. Uncle Edward said that he would go with her to Manchester, and that they would have a very pleasant journey, a great part

of the way by railroad, and that, therefore, Mary must be cheerful; that she should come back to Bingham when the visit was paid, and then Uncle Edward would come on purpose to go with her to Fairfield Abbey and Burwood Chase.

Mary's nature was perfectly obedient; and with a heavy heart, and a wish that the visit was paid, and she come back again to those who were so dear to her, she took leave of her beloved grandmamma and Aunt Emmeline, with tears in her eyes, which she tried in vain to restrain.

CHAPTER XIII.

NEW EXPERIENCE.

They were an hour behind their time at Manchester; and Aunt Willoughby, who was impatient to set off, was sitting with her cloak and bonnet on when Mary entered. Uncle Edward had no great opportunity of judging of this lady, who was so renowned for her educational powers. The post-chaise, which was to convey her home, was at the door, and in less than half an hour Mary set off. Another old lady, who was travelling to the town where Aunt Willoughby lived, had joined in the expense of the chaise, and thus Mary sat between the two ladies, and as she did not sit backward on the seat, and very upright all the time, she

never once got sight of their faces. Through the whole journey some way or other she felt sadly out of spirits, and the quiet tears, which kept streaming down her cheeks, were, to her comfort, wholly unobserved.

There was something about Aunt Willoughby that awed her. She had heard of her and her excellent management of children as long as she could remember any thing. She knew that her mother had a very high esteem for this old aunt, and would therefore wish that she should show her every possible respect and behave exceedingly well at her house, and she determined to do so. She sat very still on the seat and very straight, and tried to take as little room as possible; and she determined to be very obliging, and do all the credit she could to both her Aunt Emmeline's and her mamma's teaching; and she was very glad that she had practised her music so carefully of late, and read so much French; and, above all, that she had learned button-hole stitch and the multiplication table.

It was late in the evening when Mary arrived at Aunt Willoughby's house, which was a large square stone house on a hill side, overlooking one of the lesser manufacturing towns of Lancashire. The place was pleasant enough; there was a garden round it and a field at the back, and all in the most exact order; flowers were in bloom, and the shrubbery walk round the little field looked pleasant;

but some way it felt to Mary like a place of strangers.

Young Mrs. Willoughby was from home on a visit to Scotland, but her husband, the son of Aunt Willoughby, received them at the door, and that with great kindness. He kissed Mary, patted her on the shoulder, and then, giving his arm to his mother, conducted her into the parlour, where a comfortable tea was waiting for them. At the parlour door a little boy of about eleven met them, but without any marks of pleasure. He offered his face to the old lady to kiss, who inquired whether he had been good, to which he replied, glancing half timidly at his uncle, that he had.

"Oh, yes! he has been good," said the uncle, "very good. Arthur and I always get on well together—don't we, Arthur?" Arthur looked kindly at his uncle, but made no reply.

Mary and her little trunk were taken into her chamber, and Aunt Willoughby, who followed her, showed her the little chest of drawers where she was to keep her clothes, bidding her, at that moment, merely take off her bonnet and spencer, and come down into the parlour. Mary, again, could not help crying, all felt so strange to her; there was something cold and stiff about Aunt Willoughby, and Arthur looked quiet and half frightened. She wished the time was come for her to go back again, and then she cried more than ever.

After washing away the traces of her tears, and trying to look cheerful, she went down stairs.

They were at tea when she entered. Arthur sat as straight as possible on his chair, taking his tea very quietly, which was quite proper, because the old lady and his uncle were talking together; but still it looked to Mary constrained and unnatural, and made her uncomfortable. Whether Aunt Willoughby noticed the tearful face or not I cannot tell, but she smiled at Mary almost kindly, and told her to take the seat by Arthur.

"Mrs. Willoughby has been telling me," said Arthur's uncle, addressing Mary, "what a good little girl you have been; we have heard a deal about you from your grandmamma and other people, and therefore we expect you to be very clever and very good."

Mary felt that she was growing like Arthur; she felt as if she could not speak; as if she did not know what to say: she had not been accustomed to be praised for being good; she had hitherto tried to be so for the inward satisfaction of it, and not for the praise it would bring her; she drank her tea in silence, and sat with her eyes cast down.

I will not go through this visit day by day, but you must know that Mary was soon a great favourite with Mrs. Willoughby. She examined her in grammar, and geography, and spelling, and tables, and history; she made her hem, and seam, and back-stitch, and herring-bone; and the judg-

ment which she pronounced was, that Mary did great credit to her teachers; and that spite of reading Shakspere, and Sir Walter Scott, and the Bible, there was a deal of simplicity, and she hoped truthfulness about her; she therefore held her up as an example to Arthur.

Poor Arthur! Mrs. Willoughby intended to make him a pattern-child; but her first lessons had been to instil fear into his heart, and obedience engrafted on fear is of a spurious kind. It was long before Arthur became really friendly with Mary. I will pass over that painful time and Mary's secret tears, and now, a month after Mary's arrival, we may see the two children in that pleasant shrubbery which surrounds the little field; we shall find them very much occupied—let us inquire what they are about.

Arthur had made some little mud-houses; they were very ingenious and entirely of his own workmanship. He prepared mud and clay till it was sufficiently tenacious to hold together, and to dry without cracking; of this he built his houses: they were about a foot high, and were most perfect imitations of a great variety of houses, some larger and some smaller. The windows he made of glass, which he collected any where and every where, and built up into his walls, so that the shape of the glass was of little consequence, provided it was sufficiently large to cover the square opening of his window. He was at a loss for doors at the time when Mary

came, but she proposed pasteboard doors, which she contrived for him, and painted of various colours, as nearly to represent real doors as possible. It was the working at these houses that made Arthur friendly with Mary, and then, when once the ice of his pride and aversion was broken, an intense affection sprang up in his heart for her.

Aunt Willoughby was a rigid disciplinarian, and her system was one of so much severity that Arthur often resorted to falsehood and cunning to hide his faults and his mistakes from her knowledge. Mary saw many little instances of this, and tried to influence him to do differently; but fear makes the human mind a slave, whether it be in child or man. However, Arthur was now happy. Mary worked with him at his houses, and took great interest in all his pleasures, which thus became twofold to him.

The little village looked very pretty, especially as, to some of the houses, they gave gardens, which they inclosed with palisades made of peeled osiers; Arthur peeled them, and Mary cut them into lengths, which she connected together with strong cotton. The two children were delighted with their devices; there only wanted now some inhabitants for their houses, to complete, as they thought, their happiness. One day a mouse was caught in a trap, and instead of its being killed or given to the cat, Mary proposed to allow it one of

the houses to live in. It was an excellent notion; the little terrified mouse was turned into the largest house in the lot, the pasteboard door replaced by a slate, so that he could not eat his way out, and he was abundantly supplied with bread and cheese, candle-ends and bacon. Another of the houses was made an hospital, in which were placed all the maimed and invalided butterflies, moths, and bees which they could find.

Arthur was ambitious to inclose all his houses with palisades, and thence came great trouble; but before I speak of that I must tell you that Mary, one day, was playing at ball with Arthur and broke a pane of glass.

Arthur turned pale and then red; he was evidently frightened. "Let us run away," said he, "then they won't know who has done it."

"I have done it," said Mary, calmly looking him in the face; "I am very sorry, but I must tell Aunt Willoughby."

"Oh, how dare you!" said Arthur, "she will be so angry, you don't know how angry she will be; you have never seen her angry yet;—I never let her know when I have done any thing naughty if I can help it."

Mary felt her heart beat; Aunt Willoughby always inspired her with fear; no doubt she was still more terrible when she was angry; but that did not alter her determination, and while she was ponder-

ing about it out came Aunt Willoughby herself, to ask who had broken the window. At sight of her Arthur ran away, hiding behind a tree, through the branches of which he could, while unseen, observe what went on. His heart beat violently; he trembled for Mary; he wished it had been any body but her that had broken the glass—only not himself.

Aunt Willoughby said a great deal about carelessness and the value of property, which children must be taught to respect, but forgave Mary because she had voluntarily confessed her fault. Mary's heart was very sad; she felt that Arthur had counselled her to act both with falsehood and cowardice, and it made her unhappy; and when he came to her in the garden, with joy beaming in his eyes, because she had managed so well to get out of the scrape, as he said, she felt ashamed and humbled, nor was the end of her trouble yet come. At tea Aunt Willoughby related the circumstance of Mary's frank confession to Arthur, praising her for her truthfulness, and desiring him to take example by her; and because she had been so good, said Aunt Willoughby, she should go in a few weeks with her to Littleworth, a town at twenty miles' distance, where was a school of which she was the superintendent, that she should go with her in the post-chaise; and if Arthur was a good boy he should go also.

Again Mary's sense of right and wrong was

shocked; she had refused the reward from the young man for restoring his watch, and now she was to receive a reward for simply acknowledging an accident. Somehow it seemed odd to her that Aunt Willoughby should act in this way; she who was so wise, and for whose opinion people had such respect.

But Mary did not venture to argue the subject with her; when, however, she was in the garden with Arthur, she opened her mind to him. She said that she deserved no reward for speaking the truth, and that Arthur ought not to try to be good *merely* to go to Littleworth, but because it was his duty, and because it would make him and every body else so much happier.

Arthur, who had often wished to go to Littleworth, where Aunt Willoughby went twice a year, determined to be good according to system; was very quiet and orderly; had his lessons ready for school, and thus nearly a fortnight went on.

One Sunday morning, however, his uncle, who had more time on that day than through the whole remainder of the week, walked round his shrubbery, and looked quietly about him. At one end of the shrubbery was a little piece of water where grew a golden willow which he had brought from the south of England, and was very anxious to cultivate to a large size. Early in the summer he had observed that several branches of the willow were broken, and had inquired if Arthur knew any

thing of it. Arthur, who feared punishment, denied any knowledge of the broken branches, although it was he who had broken them for the fences of his little gardens. After this he gathered no more until Mary, by her admiration of his houses, and their gardens, induced him to go on with the fences. Mary knew where the twigs came from, but she had not the slightest idea that the breaking of them was forbidden.

The damage which had been done to the lower twigs of the willow was great; for this one year the beauty of one side was gone. Mr. Willoughby was extremely angry: remembering that they had been broken before, and that Arthur had denied having done them, he sent for the gardener; but the gardener was out of the house, and therefore he went in search of Arthur, whom he once more questioned. Arthur saw in a moment how much displeased his uncle was; his heart began to beat, as it always did on such occasions, and a sick, miserable sensation paled his cheek for one moment. He remembered his former denial, and, therefore, again denied all knowledge of the broken twigs. He carefully led his uncle away from the little houses lest he should glance at the little palings, and detect in them the peeled willow sticks.

Arthur was very unhappy. The example which Mary had set him had determined him in future to act upon it; and perhaps, if the question now had been about any thing but those willow twigs re-

specting which he had told a falsehood already, he might have had the courage to speak the truth, at least for the reward's sake.

Mr. Willoughby mentioned to his mother the annoyance he felt at his favourite tree being thus injured, and his suspicion of the gardener; and accordingly the next morning, when he was gone to the factory, she sent for the gardener that she might search the matter to the bottom. Arthur knew what was on foot; he was afraid that the gardener had seen him break the tree; an undefinable sense of dread hung over him; he knew, in all probability, that severe punishment awaited him—that very punishment which had first made him resort to a lie. Without saying a word to Mary, he busied himself in preparing his lessons, and set off to school, hoping that, when he returned at dinner-time, the storm would, some way or other, have blown over.

Mrs. Willoughby charged the gardener with breaking the tree, and he at once said that Arthur, who had used the twigs for his little fences, was the guilty person. Mrs. Willoughby, who wished to believe that Arthur had spoken the truth, said that it was impossible, for that he had denied it. The gardener, who was digging, without replying, stuck his spade into the ground, and scraping his shoes, on the edge of it, turned on to the gravel-walk, where his mistress stood, and asked her to accompany him to Arthur's little houses. She did

so, and when they were there, he went behind the bushes at the back of the little village, and brought out a quantity of the golden peeling of the willow twigs, which Arthur had thrown there for concealment.

Mrs. Willoughby, who loved Arthur, spite of her severity, and who wished, above all things, to make him a lover and practiser of truth, felt so much shocked and grieved at this proof of his falsehood and artfulness, that, without replying to the gardener, she went down the shrubbery with a very sorrowful heart, and a determination to resort to the utmost severity, to make, if possible, her grand-nephew abhor a lie.

Mary, who had been aware all the morning that a cloud was lowering over the family, and who was quite depressed by the sight of Arthur's uneasy and dejected countenance, although he had told her that nothing was amiss, was sitting in a summer-house near Arthur's little village. She saw the gardener show his mistress the willow peelings: she noticed the peculiar manner in which, on seeing them, the old lady turned away and walked towards the house, and she had heard the gardener say to himself, as he returned slowly to his digging, "The little lying rascal, would he throw the blame on me!"

So far was clear to Mary; and, with a sort of instinctive dread, she avoided going into the house, and then lingered near the back gate that she might

see Arthur when he came to his dinner, for he always returned that way, not being allowed to ring at the front gate. Arthur, whose heart was full of desperate anxiety, entered the gate as silently as possible, and almost immediately met Mary, who took him into the adjoining shrubbery, where she told him what she had seen and heard.

Arthur turned first red and then pale; large tears filled his eyes, and an expression of miserable fear, such as Mary had never seen before, fixed itself on his countenance. What shall I do, what shall I do!" exclaimed he.

"Why did you say," asked Mary, "that the gardener had broken the willow twigs, and why did you get them at all?"

Arthur made no reply, but, rushing up to his little gardens, tore up the willow fence, which was now likely to cost him so much sorrow, broke it to pieces, and threw it behind the bushes.

Mary was frightened at his passion; "Oh, what are you doing!" she said; "you are spoiling all that pretty fence!"

"Why did you tell me to get the willows?" asked Arthur, angrily.

"I never did ask you to get them," returned Mary, indignantly; "you had made some paling before I came, and you brought the willows to me; I never asked you."

"Oh, Mary!" said Arthur, sobbing violently, "just say that you got them; they won't be angry

with you; just this once say so, and I never will do so any more—do, Mary; dear, dear Mary, do! I would do any thing for you!"

"How can I!" returned Mary, "I never got a single willow twig, I knew nothing about them!"

"Just say so, Mary, for this once, to save me—to save me from a flogging; you don't know how severe my uncle is! you don't, indeed! you don't know what it is to be thrashed! I hate them all, that I do! and I won't stop here to be thrashed—I'll run away, that I will!" said Arthur, working himself up into a rage.

"Oh, Arthur!" said Mary, "you frighten me, indeed you do—it is very wicked of you to talk so! Why need you tell a story, or try to make me tell one? Go at once, there's a dear Arthur, and confess that you broke them."

"I won't confess," said Arthur, "and they may thrash me to death, but I won't confess; and if you loved me you 'd just say that it was you, because they won't scold you, and I know you got some of them!"

"How wicked of you to say so, Arthur!" said Mary, bursting into tears of grief and distress at this false charge.

Just then the dinner-bell rang, and the next moment Aunt Willoughby was seen coming along the shrubbery walk. Mary thought her countenance always severe, now it was awful; yet there was an expression of grief mingled with that severity

which any body but a terrified child would have noticed.

"Go in to your dinner, Mary, my dear," said her aunt. She did not often use terms of endearment, and at this moment it sounded to Mary almost unnatural.

Arthur, who had vowed revolt the moment before, walked submissively into the house before his aunt. As he entered the hall-door he passed Mary, who lingered on the mat; he touched her hand, and said, in a whisper of abject cowardice, "Just say it was you!"

Mary made no reply. Her aunt bade her go into the dining-room; and then seizing Arthur by the arm, with a gripe that he felt to the bone, and which was a foretaste of coming woe, dragged him into his chamber.

Arthur knew what he had to expect; and Mrs. Willoughby, with tears in her eyes, and vengeance flashing from her countenance, denounced his sin, and uttered its severe penalty.

Arthur burst into tears, sobbed, and almost danced about in the agony of dread; but his judge was a severe one; a prayer was in her heart to God for forgiveness of his offence, but she looked upon herself, and those whom she might depute to the office, as the agents of God's vengeance upon him for sin.

Arthur did not make his appearance at the dinner-table. Aunt Willoughby and Mary par-

took of it alone; but neither of them ate much: Mary could not, she was terrified in the belief that some dreadful punishment was about to be inflicted, and at the same time she was shocked and confounded by Arthur wishing her to tell a falsehood to screen himself. Not a single word was spoken during dinner. It was a miserable afternoon to Mary; tea-time came, and with it Mr. Willoughby. He and his mother had a long private conversation in the breakfast-room; and then Mary heard him go up stairs with slow and heavy steps. The whole house seemed as still as death: she could hear nothing. Arthur's chamber-door opened; she heard the cries of the unhappy boy, and the blows that were dealt upon him. She felt almost frantic. She had heard of savage beatings of children; she had heard of soldiers flogged to death; and her parents and Uncle Edward, and Mr. Sunderland, and Aunt Emmeline, had always spoken of these things as outrages on humanity. She started up and sprang to the door, for her first idea was to rescue him.

On the stairs she saw Martha, the maid, standing with her apron to her face. "Oh, I 'm all in a tremble, miss," she said; "they beat that poor lad shamefully! and not a bit of dinner has he had to-day —I 'm sure I call it quite wicked, and nothing else!"

Mrs. Willoughby's chamber adjoined Arthur's; and when she heard Mary, in her desperation shake at the bolted door, she came out, and, with

a countenance of stern sorrow, bade her return to the dining-room. Mary felt that she dared not disobey; and she rushed down stairs again, with Arthur's cries ringing in her ears, and, throwing herself on her knees, prayed for forgiveness for him, and that God would be pleased to soften the hearts of those in whose hands he was.

Tea was ready. Mr. and Mrs. Willoughby seated themselves at the table, and Mary, at her aunt's desire, did the same; but, again, she could not eat; tears chased one another down her cheeks. There was such a tumult in her heart as she had never felt before; anger, pity, a sense of outrage and violence, which seemed in her spirit like the ravages of an earthquake. No one pressed her to eat; she scarcely lifted her eyes from the table, and again, not a word was spoken.

It was a beautiful summer's evening; but who could enjoy it? Mary thought of her parents, and her beloved relatives and friends, and wept bitterly. She longed to return to them; and yet she had in her heart such an overwhelming pity for Arthur, that she felt as if she never could leave him. Terrified as she was, she asked permission to go and sit with him in his chamber; but this was forbidden, Mrs. Willoughby saying that Arthur was not yet sufficiently humbled. Mary ventured to offer a remonstrance, but her aunt sternly told her that she did not want a little girl to inform her of her duty.

That was a wretched night; miserable dreams distressed Mary in sleep; and, when she woke, it was only to a sense more depressing. At breakfast Arthur made his appearance; his eyes swollen with crying; an expression of dogged resentment in his countenance which otherwise was a pleasant one; and a label pinned to his shoulder, on which the word LIAR was written. Mary felt absolutely ill. Anger and pity again caused a tumult in her soul. She drew her chair towards Arthur's; and, not venturing to speak to him, she buttered him a nice piece of toast, which she quietly laid on his plate. He took no notice of it; and, when he had finished his breakfast, the toast remained still untouched. Mrs. Willoughby noticed it, and said that it showed how hardened his heart was, and that he ought to be ashamed of himself; and she only wished he would take example by Mary, who was younger than himself.

These were unwise words. Mary felt that she could do nothing, if her simplest acts were made causes of reproach to Arthur; and poor Arthur was too much embittered by his severe punishment and his degradation to receive kindness well, much more reproof.

Arthur wore that ignominious label all day: his sentence was to wear it for a week. Martha, the maid, of whom I spoke before, was as full of pity as Mary herself; but, then, unfortunately, in proportion to her pity for Arthur, was her resentment

against Mary, who she seemed to think was the cause of his disgrace. "You little cowardly thing," said she to Mary on the second morning, "how could you let him be beaten so; I'm sure it's quite shameful; I'm all of a tremble, yet, when I think of it; you ought to have taken the blame on yourself, for master would not have dared to have touched you, and I'll be bound to say you were as much to blame as he was!"

In vain Mary protested her innocence: Martha was determined not to believe it. The sight of that terrible label, as Arthur again presented himself at the breakfast-table, agitated her as before; but this morning she buttered no toast for him, nor showed him any marks of kindness; and Arthur, who by this time was a little softened, at least towards her, felt inconceivably grieved at her apparent coldness. A choking sensation came into his throat, and the tears fell into the tea-cup, which he held long to his lips to prevent his sobbing aloud. After the customary morning service—for I ought to have told you long ago that prayers were duly read morning and evening in this family—Mary, who had taken her resolution, followed Mr. Willoughby into the dining-room, where he went to write a letter before going to his factory, and, shutting the door after her, she threw herself on her knees before him, and begged most earnestly that he would forgive poor Arthur; and then she went on to tell, in her simple, childlike way, what were her feelings

with regard to this severe punishment, which was only calculated to harden the heart, and fill it with fear and deceit. She told him how differently her parents, and all the dear friends that she knew, thought on the subject; and that, if poor Arthur had not been so afraid of them, he would not have told the lie. Mr. Willoughby was much affected by her words; and, raising her from the ground, placed her between his knees.

"But, my child," said he, "is it not expressly said in the Scriptures, that no liar shall inherit the kingdom of heaven?"

"Yes," returned Mary; "but Christ himself says, that there is more joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, than over ninety and nine just persons who need no repentance." Take that horrid label from Arthur's shoulder; don't let him be disgraced before every body's eyes, for that only makes him hard and angry; let him love you—love you dearly, and not be afraid of you—and then he would tell no lies. And oh, Mr. Willoughby," continued Mary, "please to remember that he has no father but you and God—and no mother at all—and you must teach him to love you, and to love God, or how else can he be good and happy?"

Mary's words affected Mr. Willoughby deeply. He, however, merely replied that he would consider of what she had said, and bade her leave the room. She went into the garden, amid the bright sunshine and lovely flowers, but she noticed them not.

Arthur was sitting in the summer-house with his back in a corner, for he now took all the pains he could to keep it out of sight. He had had a good cry by himself in the summer-house; he had thought of Mary's kindness, of the bit of toast which the morning before he would not eat; he longed now to hear her voice; to be comforted by her; to be loved by somebody; and, as he thought thus, Mary was beside him. She put her arm round his neck, and drew his head to her bosom; she kissed him, and then burst into tears; Arthur did the same. Their tears mingled.

"Oh, Mary!" said he, "I am so sorry about that toast; I was so sorry I didn't eat it; I was so afraid you would not love me!"

Mary spoke to him of his error, which really was sin; she spoke to him of his punishment, which was so severe and long; and, every now and then, he would burst forth into expressions of violent resentment against his harsh relatives.

Mary, young as she was, preached up patience and meekness; she showed him how beautiful was truth, how mean and cowardly a lie. Arthur still wept. There was no chance of his going with Mrs. Willoughby and Mary to Littleworth now, but that he did not care for; the thing that troubled him was that Mary would be going in a little while, and then what should he do without her? he felt as if with her he could have the strength to speak the truth. Oh, that he had always done so!

He would try; he had prayed to God, he said, for forgiveness, and he would try for the future to do right; only he felt sometimes as if he could not love his aunt and uncle, and that he should run away: he would go to sea, or any where. Still, if they would only take that horrid label from his shoulders, he would try. Mary told him that this was the punishment of his fault; it was a very hard punishment, but that he must bear it patiently, for that, in some degree, it was deserved; and he must remember how Jesus Christ had suffered, who was innocent.

Mary talked and Arthur listened; comfort and hope seemed to come from her words. They walked down the shrubbery with their arms round each other; and then Mary saw, what she had not observed before, that the little mud village was all kicked down; the invalided butterflies and bees were crushed in the ruins, and the little mouse, that had such sumptuous quarters, was turned out of house and home, and lay dead, as if killed by violence.

Poor Arthur had done this in his miserable passion the day before. He had kicked all down; he had no longer any pleasure in any thing. Mary and he shed tears over the ruins; and those tears extinguished every smouldering ember of yet burning passion.

An hour after this Mr. Willoughby called his nephew into his room. Their interview was a long

one. But when Arthur again joined Mary in the garden, it was with a bounding step and a joyful countenance. The label was removed from his shoulders; his uncle had forgiven him. He had spoken very seriously to him, but more kindly than common; and from this time Arthur said he would always speak the truth.

In a week or two Mary was to accompany Aunt Willoughby to Littleworth. Arthur was not allowed to go. A very unexpected event, however, shortened Mary's visit, and thus this journey was not taken. One day, when she and Arthur were together in the shrubbery, who should make his appearance but Mr. Sunderland: he was come to Manchester to lecture, and had driven over on purpose to see Mary. It was just after the terrible affair which we have described, and Mary was looking pale, as might be expected, from all she had suffered. Mary had told Arthur about Mr. Sunderland; and he had now great pleasure in seeing him. He was invited to spend the day there; and the delight which he afforded to the children, with whom he spent most of his time, was inconceivable. Arthur, who had been brought up under very great constraint, and was hardly permitted to talk familiarly with people older than himself, was amazed at finding a real grown-up man so much like a merry child, a real playfellow; and yet, at the same time, there he was, with his pocket microscope, showing them all kinds of beau-

tiful things, and filling their souls with the spirit of true religion—love to God and man.

Arthur's little mud village delighted Mr. Sunderland, even in its ruins; he wanted to build it up again with him; he said he would come over from Manchester some day on purpose to do it. But Arthur had lost all love for his village; he could hardly bear to pass by it; and Mary, who knew the cause of this aversion, proposed that they should build a beautiful church, which they agreed to.

A very wonderful piece of news was communicated to Mary; her Aunt Emmeline and Uncle Edward were going that autumn to be married. How pleasant that was! And now Mary could understand many things which had seemed strange before.

Whether Mr. Sunderland saw something in Aunt Willoughby that he did not like, or whether he thought Mary was looking ill, I don't know; but this is certain, that grandmamma wrote to Aunt Willoughby wishing that Mary should go back to them immediately. Her daughter Emmeline, she said, was going to be married, and she wished to have Mary to be her little bride's-maid; to be sure it was yet two months to the wedding, but Emmeline had made up her mind to have Mary with her, and therefore she must return.

Mary's visit was thus cut short suddenly. Every body was sorry to part with her, even Aunt Willoughby and Martha. Mr. Willoughby had conceived a great affection for Mary; she had

spoken truths to him, little child as she was, which he never would forget. Poor Arthur was quite heart-broken, but his uncle now will become a loving father to him, as well as a severe instructor; but, poor lad, he does not know that yet, and the only two sources of consolation he can think of are —that Mr. Sunderland has promised to spend a day with him to build the church, and that he himself will do something or other, he does not know what, to show Mary how he loves her.

Mary returned to Ellingham, where her mamma met her; she, too, was come to stay there till Aunt Emmeline was married. Mary's accustomed light-heartedness returned, and that still more so, in consequence of a letter which Mr. Sunderland wrote to her. He and Arthur were become very good friends; he was going to stay in Lancashire all the winter, and should be at the town, where Arthur lived, for some weeks. He had taken Arthur out on an excursion, which the poor lad wonderfully enjoyed; he was quite at his ease with Mr. Sunderland, and his uncle, seeing the good influence he had on the boy, showed him (Mr. Sunderland) the greatest kindness; even stern Aunt Willoughby seemed somewhat gentler; she often spoke of Mary, and said that, after all, she did her mother a deal of credit; but then, added she, there is such a deal of difference in children; to which Mr. Sunderland remarked, that there was also a deal of difference in the way in which children were managed.

Mr. Sunderland came to Aunt Emmeline's wedding. Mary was the little bride's-maid; and what a sweet little bride's-maid she was!—Arthur wrote a letter to her, and sent her a little packet by their mutual friend; it was a very happy letter, and described several pleasant days, which Mr. Sunderland and he had spent together. The church building went on splendidly; the old ruined village was all cleared away, and his uncle was so kind now, that he came every morning to see how the church went on, and had even allowed the glazier to cut him out nice new glass windows of the exact size he wanted. The little packet contained a large pebble which he had polished: it had cost him a deal of labour, Mr. Sunderland said—this he begged Mary to keep for his sake till he could send her something very beautiful, for which he meant to save all his money.

After Aunt Emmeline's wedding Mary returned home with her parents; and you must now again fancy her where we began with her, in the old-fashioned house in the town, endeavouring through the day to do her small duties well, and sleeping at night under the out-spread wings of the four cherubims.

THE END.

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